

La Junta Tigers Athletics

Athlete/Parent Handbook



2026-27 School Year

La Junta Tiger Athletics

Athlete/Parent Handbook

The La Junta Athletic Department strives to build the best athletic program in the state of Colorado. It is the belief of all administrators and coaches that having well-disciplined, structured programs provide the student/athlete with the best possible experience as an athlete and gives La Junta the opportunity to build on the school's 26 Team and 49 Individual State Championships.

It is highly important to remember that athletics is a privilege and not a right. Athletes should remember at all times that they are students first, and that without the proper work in the classroom, the practices, travel time and contests enjoyed as athletes are not possible. Athletes also need to show behavior that represents La Junta and our schools in the best way possible. Actions have consequences in everyday life, and athletics is no different. In the end, to be the best means having great responsibility and character. It's why we show **Tiger Pride** in all we do!!

Parents hold the same responsibility to act in an appropriate manner to best represent La Junta and its athletic teams. Being disrespectful to coaches, players or officials can lead to being removed from a contest, and if the situation is a constant one, not being allowed to attend future games at La Junta. It is encouraged to let the coaches coach, the players play and officials officiate. As a parent, positive encouragement for your athlete and your team will always bring better results. Be the best example possible for our athletes.

Each team will structure their own rosters, implement their own strategies for their specific sport and set their own practice schedules and team philosophies. However, the following are the overlying rules and procedures for the Athletic Department that will be shared by all teams and athletes of La Junta Jr./Sr. High School. Any situation not covered in this handbook will refer to the student handbook or East Otero School District policy for procedures and consequences, specifically JJJ-R-1 - Extracurricular Activity Participation Policy Requirements.

Attendance

- In order to practice, students must be in attendance for four of the seven class periods. For seniors who take only six classes, they must attend three.
 - The exceptions are a medical note with a doctor's signature or AD approval.
- On game day, students must attend 100% of classes and not be tardy in order to play in that game. If the game is on the weekend, the last day of school for that week requires 100% attendance.
 - The only exceptions are a medical note with a doctor's signature or AD approval.
- Coaches will provide their own sport specific attendance rules in regards to practice participation and attendance in regard to playing time.

Behavior/Conduct

- All athletes are bound to the same school and district rules listed in the Student Code of Conduct.
- We are representatives of our families, our school and our community. In striving to be the best possible teams, we also need to display outstanding citizenship and also treat with respect those we compete against. Strive to be a class act on and off the field.

Communication

The La Junta Athletic Department understands that parental support is important to our athletic programs. Parents are encouraged to attend games, participate in fundraising efforts and help coaches plan special events for the teams their students are involved with at the coaches discretion. It is also important to let your student be coached by the coaches on the team and to not interfere with their development. If there is an issue, the following policy is encouraged:

- The La Junta Athletic Department will use the 24 hour rule to communicate with coaches after games.
 - We do not want parents raising issues they may have with the coach directly after a game. Take 24 hours to calm down and then request a meeting, using the chain of command listed below, to set up a time to meet with the appropriate person.
- The La Junta Athletic Department will follow this chain of command for parents wanting to speak with a coach about their student or any concerns.
 - The student should communicate with the coach they are having issues with first.
 - Next, the student should speak with the head coach if the issue was with an assistant coach.
 - Parent, participant and Head Coach.
 - Parent, participant and Athletic Director.
 - Parent, participant and Principal.
 - Parent, participant and Superintendent and/or designee.

Cutting Policy

- Cutting of players from the team during the early portion of the season will be determined by each head coach and be approved by the athletic director. The cutting policy will be included in the team's rules provided by the coaches at the beginning of the season.

Discipline

Coaches will have their own rules and procedures in reference to their team. Issues that demand administrative action will be handled by the Athletic Director. Those actions include violations of the student handbook or athletic department or actions deemed inappropriate for any contest or school activity.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

East Otero School District Drug and Alcohol Policy is made available to students and parents at registration and parent meetings. All students are required to have a signed statement indicating they and their parents have read the policy before they are allowed to participate in any interscholastic activity. Parents only have to sign this policy once, regardless of the number of activities the student participates in, or the number of students the parent has in school. See policy JICH and JICH-R for a more thorough explanation of the district's drug and alcohol policies.

Eligibility

1. The eligibility report is published on each Monday. The list will be released by 2nd Hour that morning by the Athletic Director.
2. A student is ineligible for all contests during the week they are failing two or more classes.
3. A student is ineligible for all contests during the week they are failing the same class two weeks in a row.
 - a. The first week in one class is considered the warning week.
 - b. If the student gets that grade up, but his/her name appears for only one different teacher the next week, that is the first week of that teacher and is also a warning week.
 - c. A student becomes ineligible only when they are on the list two weeks or more in a row in the SAME class.
4. If the teacher made an error on an athlete's grade, they have until 2 pm that same Monday to clear the student with the athletic director.
 - a. A student does not become eligible if they turn in homework after 7 am on the Monday we pull eligibility. That student will remain ineligible for the week.
5. If a student's grade goes up during the week, they are still ineligible for that week. They would then be cleared for the following week if the grade remains passing.
6. Ineligible students are still required to attend and participate in each practice for the week they are ineligible, unless they make arrangements with their head coach.
 - a. Ineligible athletes may not travel with the team to activities
 - b. Ineligible athletes may not sit on the bench at home or away.
7. Rules regarding dismissal from the team regarding ineligibility will be decided on by specific coaching staffs for each sport. Those rules will be listed in the team's rules provided at the beginning of the season.
8. OW Classes (Odyssey Ware) and CDLS Classes do count towards eligibility and have deadlines for completions that must be met.
9. All participants in interscholastic activities or athletics must earn a minimum of 2.5 credits each semester in order to be eligible to participate the following semester.

Equipment

- Student-athletes are responsible for all uniforms, equipment and gear issued to them by the coaches at the beginning of the season. Coaches will keep an inventory of all equipment checked out to the athletes. The athletes will be responsible for paying to replace all equipment or uniforms they damage or lose outside the normal wear and tear of the season.
 - Example - if a student has to have his jersey cut due to an injury or medical issue, the player is not responsible for that replacement.
- All game uniforms are the property of the school, and are not to be worn by anyone but the student athlete for practices and games.

Fees

Listed below are the Sports Fees for the 2025-26 school year. These must be paid before the first game or the student/athlete will not be allowed to participate.

Single Athlete	In District	Out of District
1 Sport	\$30	\$50
2 Sports	\$60	\$100
3 Sports	\$75	\$120
4 Sports (Jr. High Only)	\$100	\$150
Family Plan (4 or more sports)	\$100	\$150

If there is a financial difficulty, the athlete can work with the athletic director to help with paying off the sports fee. The athlete or the family must make contact with the athletic director to arrange for this option.

Hazing

Hazing is putting new members of a team or club through humiliating and sometimes dangerous initiation rituals. There is a zero tolerance towards hazing in the La Junta Athletic Department. Any member or members of a team caught using hazing rituals or actions will be immediately removed from the team, and jeopardizes playing for La Junta in any sport in the future.

Lettering

To earn a varsity letter, an athlete needs to participate in half of the varsity events or participate meaningful minutes in a State playoff contest. If a player quits during the season they forfeit their right to lettering in that particular sport.

Lockers

The locker room can be a difficult place if certain guidelines are not followed. Each athlete should be issued a locker to keep all of their belongings. Theft, whether we talk about it to our athletes a million times or not, is going to occur if there is an opportunity. Lockers should be locked during practice to insure your personal belongings. Lockers should not be shared, each athlete should have their own individual locker. If an athlete does not use their locker and leaves their belongings laying around, theft risk is high and unfortunately, there is nothing that can be done about theft since cameras are not placed in locker rooms.

Meal Stipend

For State Playoff competition, each player will be provided meal money when the team they compete on travels for regional or state competition. Below is the stipend breakdown:

Breakfast - \$10

Lunch - \$15

Dinner - \$25

Money will be dispersed to the athletes and it will be their responsibility to manage their money. They will also be required to sign for their money when it is dispersed to them by the coach. If the hotel the team is staying in has breakfast available, there will be no breakfast stipend.

Physical Examinations/Family ID

Per CHSAA, an athlete must have a current physical examination and paperwork on file with the school. The physical is good for one calendar year. If a student athlete has an expired physical, or the season starts without the student having gotten a physical, that athlete is not allowed to physically participate in practice until the physical is performed and paperwork is returned to either the Athletic/High School Attendance Secretary or the Athletic Director.

Family ID is the school's information hub for student/athletes. All important and required documents and information must be completed on Family ID for the athletes to participate in practice. Below is the link to Family ID for registration or login to complete all paperwork.

<https://account.students.arbitersports.com/>

Social Media

If athletes are found to be posting on Social Media about other athletes or teams in a negative way, spreading rumors about other teams, or generally degrading anything associated with La Junta High School, its staff or students, the athlete will 1) Meet with Coach to discuss impact of social media and 2) Be subject to suspension based on severity of post. If the action continues, the Athletic Director will meet with the athlete to discuss consequences, which could include dismissal from the team or squad.

Coaches will use Team Apps (i.e. - Band, Rewind) to communicate with players regarding practices, changes and anything team related. Coaches can also have Facebook pages dedicated to their sport where they make announcements, etc. Coaches should not be having non-sport or educational related conversations through email, text or social media communication with athletes for any other reason.

Suspensions

If a student is suspended from East Otero School District by school administration, those students are not allowed to participate in practices, games or attend extracurricular activities sponsored by East Otero School District. They will not be able to function as a team member during their suspension, whether in La Junta or if they attend a road game with a parent/guardian.

Tardies

Being tardy to classes during the school day negatively affects the educational environment of the school. It is expected for the student/athlete to be to class on time throughout the day, including the beginning of the school day. If there becomes a situation where a student has been tardy to 5 or more to any of their classes during a quarter, they jeopardize being suspended from practice. If the tardies continue after acquiring six, the student will be suspended from games (after 10) or eventually dismissed from the team (after 15).

Transportation

All transportation rules and regulations will be enforced by activity bus drivers. You are expected to follow all bus rules and regulations. Failure to follow can result in no longer being able to travel with the team, which would mean dismissal from the team as individuals on teams are not allowed to transport themselves unless there is an approved exception by Superintendent, Principal or Athletic Director. Refer to bus infractions in the Student Handbook for procedures and consequences.

Sports Offered - 2025-26

High School

Fall	Winter	Spring
Cross Country (Boys & Girls)	Basketball (Boys & Girls)	Baseball
Football	Wrestling (Boys & Girls)	Golf (Girls)
Softball		Track (Boys & Girls)
Volleyball (Girls)		Tennis (Girls)

Junior High

1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Cross Country (B & G)	Basketball (Boys)	Basketball (Girls)	Track (Boys & Girls)
Football	Wrestling (Girls)	Wrestling (Boys)	
Volleyball			

Sports - Head Coaches - 2025-26

High School		Junior High	
Baseball	Ryan Denahy	Boys Basketball	D.C. DiPrince
Boys Basketball	Vacant	Boys Wrestling	Justin Samora
Boys Wrestling	Will Tyler	Cross Country	D.C. DiPrince
Cheerleading	Renee Good	Football	Wyatt Buhr
Cross Country	D.C. DiPrince	Girls Basketball	Michelle Montoya
Football	Drew Sisson	Girls Wrestling	Justin Samora
Girls Basketball	Duane Grasmick	Track & Field	Vacant
Girls Golf	D.C. DiPrince	Volleyball	Bianca Reyes
Girls Tennis	Courtney Ayala		
Girls Wrestling	Diego Reyes		
Softball	Roger Davis		
Track & Field	Kristi Mayo		
Volleyball	Rebecca Miner		

Junior High Practice - 4:30 pm

La Junta Junior High School Practices will be held after school at 4:30 pm at locations away from the Jr./Sr. High School building. Here is all the information needed for planning out Junior High Sports.

Transportation

There will be transportation to the Intermediate School every school day for practice or games.

- ☐ Students will report to Tiger Gym after school at 4 pm in the concessions lobby area unless otherwise announced differently.
- ☐ The bus will be there at 4:10 pm and will leave for the Intermediate School at 4:15 pm.
- ☐ Any students who miss the bus will have to either walk to the Intermediate School or miss practice, which could affect their playing status.

Team Construction

Many of our sports allow for a mix of 7th and 8th graders for varsity because we do not cut. Examples of those sports are Football, Wrestling and Track. With us having limited gym capacity for Volleyball and Basketball, our A Team will be all 8th graders and our B Team will be 7th graders, to ensure that if we have to cut we are not having an uneven balance in 7th and 8th grade participants.

Team	A Team	B Team
Football	7th & 8th Graders	7th and 8th Graders
Cross Country	7th & 8th Graders	7th and 8th Graders
Volleyball (Program might cut)	8th Graders	7th Graders
Basketball (Program might cut)	8th Graders	7th Graders
Wrestling	7th & 8th Graders	7th & 8th Graders
Track & Field	7th & 8th Graders	

Cutting Policy

Coaches will be required to have the first two days of practice be skill evaluation and testing, which will be documented and saved. After these two days of tryouts, the final roster will be announced and those who do not make the team will be removed from the participation list.

Locker Rooms & Practice Areas & Games

Team	Practice Area	Games Played at
Football	IMS Football Field	Tiger Stadium
Cross Country	With High School practice	N/A
Volleyball	IMS Gym	IMS Gym
Basketball	IMS Gym	IMS Gym
Wrestling	TTA Gym	Tiger Gym
Track & Field	IMS Football Field	Tiger Stadium

Locker Room Needs

There is a large amount of PE equipment in the locker rooms. We will need to get that cleared out and stored somewhere else. We will want to have functioning locker rooms for games. The two off the gym will be used for our home teams. The girls locker room will be for volleyball and the boys locker room for football. When there are home volleyball games, we will make arrangements with the school to use a classroom if possible. The locker rooms will be for our teams only.

La Junta Jr./Sr. High School Athletic Department



Junior High Athletics - Making Cuts from Teams with too many players

In some years, the number of athletes who join a junior high team is too large to be able to provide uniforms and playing time for everyone. In those instances, the coaching staff of that particular sport might have to cut players from the team in the first week of the season. Below are the maximum numbers for the junior high sports that are offered at La Junta:

Football - 60 players total for JV and Varsity
Volleyball - 24 players maximum for 2 teams
Boys and Girls Basketball - 24 players maximum for 2 teams
Boys and Girls Wrestling - 30 wrestlers for 2 teams
Track - 60 participants total

This is something the athletic department does not take lightly. We want as many participants as possible to get the opportunity to play athletics for La Junta Junior High School. If you have any questions or concerns about the cutting procedures, please contact me. Thank you and have a great week!

Duane Grasmick, Athletic Director
dgrasmick@lajunta.k12.co.us
(719) 384-3042

La Junta Tigers Athletic Department

La Junta Jr./Sr. High School
1817 Smithland Ave.
La Junta, CO 81050
(719) 384-4467



Duane Grasmick, Athletic Director
(719) 384-3042 (Office)
(719) 671-7163 (Cell)
dgrasmick@lajunta.k12.co.us

6th Grade and Below - Athletic Department Attendance Procedures

No 6th grade and below students will be allowed at High School games without a parent/guardian or adult over the age of 18 present and supervising students.

The amount of unsupervised students from the Intermediate and Primary schools have become a problem at the high school games. These students are typically running all around the Stadium Patio by the concessions or playing football on the grass areas outside the fence, oftentimes using inappropriate language as they are playing. They also must be redirected many times by the Police Officers and administration who are doing security for the game. There are concerns that this could lead to injuries to the kids themselves or our fans, especially our elderly fans, at the games.

The administration at the Jr./Sr. High School requires parents of 6th graders or below to attend games with their parents/guardians or another adult who will take responsibility for those students. ALL students within our East Otero School District will be required to show their School ID at the gate. Those students from the Intermediate or Primary will not be allowed into the game unless supervised by an adult. If they do not produce a school ID, they will either have to leave (Intermediate and below) or pay the admission fee (HS, JH and TTA only for this option). This procedure will take place on September 26th at our home Volleyball game versus Manitou Springs. Sports affected by this procedure will be Football, Volleyball, Basketball and Baseball, all of which require a gate. There is no gate for Softball, but parents are encouraged to follow the same policy of supervising their children.