Dear *Senco or teacher name*

My *son/daughter, child’s name,* will be joining your school/class in September and I wanted to give you some background information on the long-term condition they have. (Adapt this if the child has been diagnosed within the school year).

*Child’s name* has juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) which is an inflammatory condition affecting the joints but can on rare occasions affect internal organs and the eyes (a condition called Uveitis). *Childs name* has had JIA since they were age of (*insert child’s age*) years. *His/her* condition is managed by medications and most of the time you will not notice any difference between (*child’s name*) and their peers. These medications include methotrexate and adalimumab (*add/delete as necessary*). Methotrexate (*change if on a different DMARD*) is a disease modifying drug used to dampen the immune system, ease pain and swelling and to prevent long term joint damage. Adalimumab is a biologic drug that target specific cells of the immune system that cause inflammation. For everyday pain and when they are having a flare he/she takes NSAID/paracetamol to help with the day to day pain and inflammation. (Add or delete as necessary).

*Child’s name* has JIA in (list the joints affected) which cause him/her stiffness and pain. Fatigue is, at times a side effect of his/her medication as well as the JIA itself. It is important to know that h*e/she* may need to get up from their chair as inactivity can cause *him/her* to become stiff. Conversely, *he/she* may need to take a seat at times as being overactive may cause joint pain e.g. during physical education. Sitting cross legged is also very painful for *him/her* so they will need a chair to sit on.

In the event of a ‘flare’ the above symptoms will be considerably intensified, perhaps even making it hard to walk, write or carry out daily activities. Flares can be triggered by all kind of things e.g. after an infection (to which *he/she* is more susceptible to due to both the disease itself and the immune suppressant medications used to treat it), highly stressful situations; school exam pressures, changing school, moving home. *We/I* notify the school if *child’s name* is having a prolonged flare.

Schools have a duty of care to support pupils who have a medical condition. Schools in England and Wales use an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) to detail what a child needs to support them with their medical condition. Although they are not routinely used in Scotland and Northern Ireland, an IHP can be used a basis for discussions. *(Delete if not in Scotland/Northern Ireland).*

Enclosed is a draft IHP put together with *child’s name* physiotherapist/occupational therapist (add or delete if necessary) explaining where daily support is needed from the school, which we can discuss and agree upon.

The booklets enclosed are from the charity JIA-at-NRAS explaining JIA in more detail and specifically how you can support not only *child’s name* but other children with JIA in schools. It would be useful to pass these around your staff, so they are all aware of JIA.

Having JIA does mean *child’s name* will likely be attending hospital appointments for regular on-going care. Whilst we will try to schedule these outside of school hours, I hope you can understand that this may not be possible to do so. I will try to let you know as far in advance as possible of any scheduled appointments so that we can prepare for *his/her* absence. Please can you let me know of the school policy e.g. do you need a copy of the hospital appointment letter and do I need to telephone the school the day of the absence.

Please let *me/us* know when it is convenient for you to meet to agree *child’s name* IHP and the school medical absence policy. I am sure we can work together to ensure *child’s name* is fully supported in your school.

Yours Sincerely