

## **SAMPLE LETTER TO TEACHER**

Dear Teacher and School Nurse:

I am a student with a type of juvenile arthritis. There are approximately 300,000 children with arthritis in the U.S., but it is possible that you may never have had a student with arthritis in your class before.

There are some things I want to let you know about me. At times, I have really bad joint pain and fatigue. Because juvenile arthritis is a disease you can't always see, sometimes people don't understand. So if I am quiet, it doesn't mean that I'm not interested in school. Mornings can be a problem because my joints may be stiff for the first few hours after I get up. Sometimes by late afternoon I feel tired. A lot of the time I feel really good, but when my arthritis becomes active, I usually feel pretty uncomfortable. I hope this will explain why I have "up" days and "down" days.

I want to be in school whenever I can because I know that it is important for my education. I also want to be involved in as many activities as I can, but there may be times that I may need to work out some special arrangements. I can't always take part in the regular playground or physical education programs. Sometimes I have a problem if the distance to the cafeteria or between classes is long or if I have to stand in long lines. I may need to leave school for a doctor or physical therapist appointment.

I hope you will ask my parents or me if you have any questions or concerns. My mom and dad will keep you informed if there are any major changes in my condition during the year. The nurse at my doctor's office can also tell you more about my disease and answer questions for you.

I have the same needs for accomplishment and success as all kids, so I want you to have the same expectations for me that you do for all other children. I may take more time or have to do things differently, but I can do the same things the other kids do if you will let me. If I can't finish my work on time, please let me take home my assignment to finish instead of excusing me because I have arthritis.

I'm including a document that outlines other issues that may affect how I perform at school. I am also enclosing a brochure about juvenile arthritis that was developed by the Arthritis Foundation specifically for teachers like you.

Thanks for letting me tell you a little about myself. If you have any other questions, please feel free to ask me or my parents.

Thank you,

Your Student