



# JUVENILE COURT OF SHELBY COUNTY

Probation and Court Services

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## Apology Letter Guidelines

Being asked to write a letter of apology is a result of your inappropriate and/or unlawful behavior. This should be an opportunity for you to think clearly about how your actions impact the lives of others. This letter is a part of the accountability process.

Your goal will be to write a personal, sincere and honest apology. If you are not truly sorry, we still have work to do.

Your letter must include the following:

1. **Consider the feelings of the person(s) you affected.** Think about how you would feel if this happened to you? What emotions you might feel – afraid, sad, mad? Explain that you would feel this way too.
2. **Admit your offense.** Don't try to avoid or minimize what you did. Admit what you did and move forward.
3. **Consider the impact of your actions on others.** Think big picture here. Explain some of the ways that this hurt others and how you may have hurt more than just one person.
4. **Explain how this will help you change for the better.** Everyone wants you to succeed. Write about changes that you plan to make and what will be better from now on.
5. **Actions speak louder than words.** We hear this often but it is very important that you admit your mistake and even more important that you learn from your mistakes. List steps you plan to take to show to show the person(s) affected that you are taking responsibility for your actions.
6. **The letter must be handwritten.** A handwritten letter shows that you took personal time to begin the healing process. This letter needs to be legible and neatly presented. Keep in mind that it may be mailed or presented to your victim. This letter needs to be a minimum of one page long. You would need permission from your JPO to type this letter. If typed, use font size 12 and double space.

We are here to help you begin to recognize the impact your actions have on others.

If you have questions or need assistance writing your letter of apology, please contact your JPO at 205-669-3831.