

*SAMPLE LETTER for Congregations informing of Criminal history and action taken by the Church
Please note that this is a sample letter to be adapted to the specific scenario.*

(Date)

Dear Member of (Name of Church);

We were recently made aware that a member/regular attender (insert name of individual) of *(Name of Church)*

has a criminal history involving children/youth. After consulting with the CRCNA's Office of Safe Church Ministry and/or Classis Chatham Safe Church Ministry, we have established a "Covenant of Conduct" with the one who has offended, which specifies the circumstances under which he or she may continue worshipping at *(Name of Church)*.

Some of the specifics of the covenant include no participation of any kind in any child or youth-related programs and no access to areas where children and youth are present without adult presence. In addition the one who has offended has agreed to be present in the church only at designated times, during activities in which *(he or she)* is actively participating. Any variation from this Covenant will result in immediate expulsion from the property. Contact with local authorities will be made, if needed. This agreement has been signed by *(the position of all parties who have signed, for example, "the one who has offended, the pastor, and the chair of council...)*.

We recognize that there is a very clear need to take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of the children and youth who have been entrusted to our care. Our knowledge of the situation, and of the devastating effects of sexual abuse, require us to regard anyone who has offended in this way with unwavering caution; especially where children and youth are concerned. At the same time, we believe that it is important, as a Christian community, to continue to deal with the one who has offended with the grace of our Lord, in which we all live. We must remember our call to be Christ's ambassadors to all who stand before Him, as broken people.

We also want to recognize that the sharing of this information can be triggering for those who have been impacted by abuse. We encourage you to reach out for support and want to highlight some resources available including the Safe Church Classis Chatham Counselling Fund, and the Congregational Assistance Program (CAPS) through Shalem. *(if available at your church)*.

Connect with the pastor or council members for more information.

Please continue to pray for all of our children and also that the environment at *(name of church)* will remain a safe nurturing environment for worship and for growth. Feel free to discuss this situation further with your Elder or Pastor *(or list names of trustworthy individuals who may be contacted)*.

Sincerely,

(Name)

(Position)