

Fine-Free and Overdue Materials Policy

Purpose

To make the library more equitable, the Ford City Public Library (FCPL) is a fine-free library as of January 1, 2024. Eliminating fines ensures that all people have equal access to library materials and resources, encouraging the pursuit of life-long learning.

Goals for a Fine-Free Library

- I. To conform with current fine-free trends in a digitally advanced world
- II. To increase access and encourage prior users to come back to the library and attract new users to utilize the resources and services the library offers
- III. To remove barriers that prevent patron usage due to fines that could accrue
- IV. To improve customer service and the patron's overall library experience

Fine-free Guidelines

- I. All Ford City Public Library owned materials will no longer generate overdue fines.

Fee Guidelines

- I. Lost Materials
 - i. Materials can be checked out for 3 weeks. Patrons may choose to renew materials up to 2 times, for an additional 3 weeks each time (9 weeks in total). Renewals are allowed as long as no other patron has placed a reserve on an item.
 - ii. Receipts with due dates are printed at the time of check out (or emailed to patrons if they have opted for this delivery method). Patrons may also opt-in for email or text reminders of an approaching due date.
 - iii. Once an item becomes overdue, FCPL provides a 1 week courtesy period during which the item may be renewed or returned.
 - iv. Once an item is 1 week overdue, library staff will attempt to notify patron by phone. At this time, materials are declared "LOST," and the replacement cost will be added to the patron's account as a pending charge.
 - v. If a lost item is returned at this stage, the replacement cost will be removed from the patron's account.
 - vi. Once an item is 3 weeks overdue, the replacement cost charge becomes final, and a bill with the replacement cost and associated processing fee (\$5.00 per item) will be mailed to the patron. At this time, the patron is required to pay the replacement cost and associated processing fee(s) per lost item.

- vii. Patrons with an account balance of \$35.00 or less may continue to check out library materials.
- II. Damaged Materials
 - i. Patrons will be charged for items that are returned damaged and declared unsuitable for the collection.
- III. Interlibrary Loan Materials
 - i. A minimum fee of \$25.00 will be charged for lost or damaged materials obtained through Interlibrary Loan.

Courtesy Overdue Reminders

- I. FCPL will send patrons a courtesy reminder on the following schedule:

Notice	Method	Timeline
Automatic Reminder	By email or text *By patron sign up only	2 days before due
Overdue (Stage 1 & 2)	By email, text, or automated phone call	2+ days overdue; 6+ days overdue
Overdue (Stage 3)	By mail (final warning)	10+ days overdue
Invoice	By mail *Once a bill is mailed, the replacement cost cannot be removed from a patron's account	21+ days overdue

Patron Responsibilities

- I. Patrons will no longer accrue a daily overdue fine on late materials. Patrons are still responsible for all borrowed library materials and are encouraged to return all items in a timely manner as outlined in this policy.
- II. Patrons who accrued overdue fines with FCPL before December 3, 2023 are required to pay these fines.
- III. Patrons are responsible for ensuring their contact information and opt-in notification services are correct in the library account.