

# FINE-FREE POLICY

## BACKGROUND

Whereas libraries exist to enrich their community and strive to provide stress-free and open access to all our patrons, Ballston Spa Public Library (the library) is adopting a fine-free policy with regard to our checked out materials.

Libraries across the nation have demonstrated that imposing late fees on patrons is not an effective deterrent to the return of late materials. Instead, it commonly creates barriers for youth or may cause patron guilt, making library use less likely. We strive to overcome these barriers and increase access to our patrons, trusting that our show of good faith will encourage patrons to return materials in a timely manner

## OVERDUE, LOST MATERIAL AND FINE-FREE PROCEDURES

While traditional fines will not accrue, a replacement cost will be charged if an item is not returned within a reasonable time. **Please note:** this policy for replacement of lost or damaged materials pertains to Ballston Spa Public Library materials ONLY. If an item is from another area library, the patron needs to consult with that library to know how to proceed.

For **books and materials that check out for three weeks, after 30 days past due** the patron's account will automatically incur the full replacement cost of the item.

For **DVDs and items that check out for one week, at 30 days past due** the patron assumes the full replacement cost of the item.

It is at the discretion of library staff to determine if special circumstances allow replacement fines to be waived if items are returned after these designated periods. Once paid for, materials are the property of the patron and replacement fees will not be refunded.

Patrons with charges for items that have not been returned in the period listed in the previous paragraph will have their account blocked until related fees have been paid to the \$7.00 maximum fine threshold.

If an item is late due to being **lost or damaged**, patrons should notify the library of the items' status. Library staff will work with patrons to extend due dates (when possible and within reason) for missing items. **Replacements** may be accepted for lost or damaged items if:

- The replacement is in “new” condition (either a brand new item or like new) and matches the description of the item lost/damaged (i.e. hardcover, paperback, large print)
- Cash or check payment will also be accepted for lost items

#### PRIOR LATE FINES

All late fines existing before the adoption of this policy will be waived. Lost/damaged item charges will remain.

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