



Fine Free Policy FAQ

1. Does this policy change mean I can keep my library materials forever?

No, all library materials will still have a due date. As the due date approaches, the library will notify the patron of the due date and ask that they return it (if the item is not eligible for renewal). If the item is six weeks overdue, a bill will be mailed and if an item is more than six weeks overdue, the account may be referred to a collection agency depending on the owning library.

2. If patrons are not charged overdue fines, will items still be returned in a timely manner?

Yes, our expectation is that the majority of items checked out will still be returned within a few days of the due date, regardless of an overdue fine. Most library patrons are responsible users and will continue to return items on or near the due date. Other libraries that have made this change have not seen a significant change in the rate of items that are overdue and see around 95% of items returned within one week of the due date.

3. Will the library eliminate previously accrued overdue fines?

Yes, along with the policy change to cease charging overdue fines on materials, we also granted an amnesty on all overdue fines accrued under the old policy. This includes overdue fines on items from other Allegheny County Library Association libraries. However, patrons are still responsible for lost or damaged items and manual charges for printing, book sale, etc.

4. Will the library change the fee limit at which we block accounts?

No changes will be made to the current limits at which the library blocks account privileges (borrowing, renewal, e-resources, and databases access) if more than \$10.00 in fees are owed.

5. Will materials accrue a daily overdue fine?

If items are checked out from and returned to Cooper-Siegel Community Library or Sharpsburg Community Library, they will no longer accrue overdue fines. Damaged items, lost items, and items that are not returned after all eligible renewals have been used will generate replacement fees.

6. Are all Allegheny County Library Association libraries fine free?

No. If a borrowed item is not owned by Cooper-Siegel Community Library or Sharpsburg Community Library and it is returned to another library in the county, the patron may be charged fines on that item.

7. Will the library give refunds to patrons who paid their overdue fines before this change?

No, the library does not refund overdue fines previously paid under the old late fee policy.

8. Will the library continue to use the Unique Management Services collection agency?

Yes, the collection agency gives us an avenue to ensure that all materials are returned.

9. Will there be overdue fines on Inter Library Loans (ILL) that are checked out at Cooper-Siegel Community Library or Sharpsburg Community Library?

No, ILLs will not have fines if they are checked out at Cooper-Siegel Community Library or Sharpsburg Community Library.

10. What is the difference between a fine and a fee?

Fines: money owed for overdue items

Fees: money owed for replacement items, collection agency charges, and other manual charges, such as copying fees