



## Staff Report

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**TO:** Library Board of Trustees  
**FROM:** Sarah Comstock, Community Engagement Librarian  
**DATE:** May 1, 2021  
**RE:** Changes to Loomis Library & Community Learning Center Policies and elimination of overdue fees.

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### **Recommendation**

1. Authorize the cessation of charging overdue fines; and
2. Direct staff to waive all existing overdue fines; and
3. Update the Loomis Library & Community Learning Center Policy Manual to reflect these changes

### **Issue Statement and Discussion**

Currently, the library charges a \$0.25 per item per day overdue fee to patrons who return library items in good condition after the item's assigned due date. These overdue fines are intended to protect the community's investment in the collection by ensuring that items are returned on time. However, analysis of overdue fines at libraries across the country reveal that overdue fines not only fail to encourage the timely return of overdue library materials, but actively discourage disadvantaged community members from using the library and in fact decrease the return of these materials. By continuing to implement fees for overdue items, we run the risk of alienating and shaming the members of our community who have the most to gain from use of the library.

Libraries who have gone fine-free have found that it increases patron access to materials and services, reduces the inequitable impact of overdue fines, improves the patron relationships with the library, and optimizes library staff time and efficiency. Library systems which have eliminated overdue fines often see increases in circulation and the number of patrons using the library.

By waiving all existing fines, the library ensures that the policy is fair to all patrons. The library currently has about \$2,000 in outstanding overdue fees, much of which is over 2 years old and is unlikely to ever be collected.

Fines from overdue items are on average \$950 per year. Overdue fees do not represent a significant portion of the library's budget, and the elimination of these fees would see little financial impact to the library.

The library would continue to charge replacement fees for items 21 days overdue as well as items returned damaged.

**Financial and/or Policy Implications**

Fines from overdue items are on average \$950 per year. Overdue fees do not represent a significant portion of the library's budget, and the elimination of these fees would see little financial impact to the library.

**Attachments**

- A. Loomis Library & Community Learning Center Circulation Policy (proposed changes highlighted in yellow)

# Circulation

Approved by Library Board: July, 2018

Latest Update: September, 2019

## Purpose

The library will set policies for circulating items in order to ensure that adequate records are kept of circulating library materials, to generate circulation statistics, and to ensure fair and equal access to library materials for all patrons.

## Issues

### **Confidentiality**

The Loomis Library & Community Learning Center has the responsibility, under the California Public Records Act, to establish a policy that all registration and circulation records of the Loomis Library & Community Learning Center are confidential. This includes patron registration, circulation, computer usage, and material requests in any form.

Section 6267 of the California State Government Code reads:

*All registration and circulation records of any library which is in whole or in part supported by public funds shall remain confidential and shall not be disclosed to any person, local agency, or state agency except as follows:*

- *By a person acting within the scope of his or her duties within the administration of the library*
- *By a person authorized, in writing, by the individual to whom the records pertain, to inspect the records*
- *By order of the appropriate superior court*

*As used in this section, the term "registration records" includes any information which a library requires a patron to provide in order to become eligible to borrow books and other materials, and the term "circulation records" includes any information which identifies the patron borrowing particular books and other material.*

*This section shall not apply to statistical reports of registration and circulation nor to records of fines collected by the library.*

Access to a patron record is allowed only by:

- Library staff acting within the scope of their duties
- Written consent of the patron

- Court order or other act of law

To protect confidentiality of the patron the following procedure has been established when someone reports a found library card:

- Only the card is found – Ask them to return it to the library.
- The card is found with other personal items – Ask them to turn it over to the police.
- The card is found by or given to the police or fire officers in the line of duty – The officer should be referred to the Community Engagement Librarian or staff if the Librarian is not available.

### **Equality**

The Loomis Library & Community Learning Center adopts the standard of equal access in accordance with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, which states in section V:

*"A person's right to use a Library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views,"*

and the ALA's Code of Ethics which states in section I:

*"We provide the highest level of service to all Library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests." [See appendices for the full text of each document.]*

## **Library Cards**

### **Residents & Nonresidents**

Any resident of California may obtain a new card for free as part of Universal Borrowing outlined in California Education Code 18731. Applicants that live outside of California will be issued a card with a limited check out. The borrower or guardian is responsible for the card's security, for any material checked out, and for any charges incurred. For protection, patrons are encouraged to report a lost or stolen card as soon as possible.

### **Minors**

Library cards are issued to individuals regardless of age. A parent or legal guardian *must* sign for applicants under the age of 18. The child must be present to receive a card. The parents' signature on the child's application indicates that the parent accepts responsibility of supervising the child's library card use.

### **Applying**

Library cards may be applied for in person. Applicants must present picture identification and one proof of address. Minors (under 18) must have a parent or legal guardian provide picture identification and proof of address from the following list. Temporary or out of state residents must show ID with permanent mailing address.

Examples of acceptable picture identification:

- California driver's license or identification card

- Passport
- School or Military identification
- Resident Alien card
- Matricula Consular card

Examples of acceptable proof of address:

- California driver's license or identification card
- Utility bill showing address
- Postmarked envelope from a business or professional person
- Checkbook showing local address
- Military ID

### **Lost and Replacement Cards**

The cardholder must report a lost or stolen library card immediately. There is a \$1.00 charge for a replacement card. Picture identification is necessary to replace a lost or stolen library card. Parent or legal guardian must sign an application and provide picture identification to replace the card of children under 18.

Changes to name, mailing address, e-mail, or telephone number should be reported immediately.

Library cards require updating periodically in order to verify information. Cards that are not used for three or more years may be deleted from the system.

## **Circulation Services**

### **Borrowing Periods**

- Items may be checked out for a 21-day period.
- Patrons may have up to 25 items checked out at one time. This limit may be waived for teachers (teachers or homeschooling parents) to allow them to check out materials for classroom use.
- Library materials may be renewed up to two times, either in person, by phone, or via the online catalog providing the item is not on hold for another patron.
- Renewals are made for three weeks.

### **Reserves/Holds**

Patrons may place a "hold" or request for library materials that are checked out or on order either in person, by phone, or via the online catalog. When the material becomes available for checkout the requesting patron will receive a phone call, text, or email. A patron may have 25 holds placed concurrently.

### **Overdue, Lost, and Damaged Items**

- All patrons with an email address or who opt to receive text messages in their records will receive a reminder three days before the item is due.

- Three days past an item's due date, patrons will be notified by email, text, or phone that their items need to be renewed or returned. Additional notifications will be sent at three, seven, and fourteen days past an item's due date.
- When an item is 30 days past due, the item will be declared "lost" and the patron will receive a bill for the replacement cost of the item. Returning or replacing the item will reverse the charge.
- If a patron reports an item as lost, the patron will be charged the replacement.
- Patrons will be charged for damaged items, including packaging (book covers, DVD cases, etc.), based on the extent of the damage. If the item can no longer be used by the library, the full cost will be charged.
- Accounts with lost or damaged item(s) will be blocked, resulting in the loss of library privileges, until the item(s) are replaced or the replacement fee is paid below \$10.00.
- If a patron finds a lost item for which they have already paid, and it is in good condition, they may return it to the library for up to a year for a full refund.
- In the event of theft or other extreme circumstances (e.g. fire, flood) in the loss of an item, patrons must provide a police report or evidence of the event.

#### Fines

- Patrons are charged \$0.25 per item per day accruing only on days of library operation.
- Maximum overdue fine on each item is \$10.00 and will result in loss of library privileges until the fine is paid below \$10.00.
- For items returned to the wrong library, where Loomis Library staff has to retrieve the item from the incorrect library, the patron will be charged a \$5.00 service fee. This fee is per patron, not per item.

#### Copier/Printer

There is a \$0.15 charge for copies or prints made in black and white and a \$0.30 charge for copies or prints made in color.