

Maxwell Memorial Library Fine-Free Policy

Purpose

To make the library more equitable, Maxwell Memorial Library will no longer charge late fines on most materials (there are some exceptions). Eliminating fines ensures all people have free access to library books and materials, which is our priority as a public library.

Why Go Fine Free?

1. **It's Good for Our Community.** Libraries are for everyone, and our community is stronger when people have access to the materials, programs and services they need to pursue lifelong learning. When patrons begin accumulating overdue fines and fees, they feel less inclined to visit the library. Fines also create a barrier to library access that disproportionately affects low-income households. Our goal in removing fines is to provide equitable library access to everyone in the community.
2. **Late Fines Are Not Effective.** Studies show small fines have no impact on return rates of library materials. Those with overdue fines are less likely to visit the library again.
3. **Modeling Onondaga County Library System.** Branch libraries in the City of Syracuse along with many neighboring member libraries have changed their policies and gone fine-free. By modeling this policy, it creates less confusion for patrons who visit and borrow items from other libraries.

Patron Responsibilities

- Patrons who amassed overdue fines with Maxwell Memorial Library before we went fine-free are no longer required to pay those fines. If you have a fine on your account, please ask to speak someone at the Front Desk.
- You are still responsible for all borrowed library materials and encouraged to return all items in a timely manner.
- Fees for damaged and lost items still apply and will be charged to borrowers' accounts.
- If items are overdue by 30 days, patrons will be charged for the replacement cost of the item plus a processing fee.
- You will be charged overdue fines for those items in our special collections. Fines for special collection items are \$2.00 a day for a maximum of \$20.00. Items in the following special collections accrue fines:
 - Museum and Park Passes
 - Cake Pans
 - Board Games for Kids and Teens
 - Tech Toys for Kids and Teens
 - Early Literacy Backpacks
 - Technology

Adopted by the Maxwell Memorial Library Board of Trustees on June 27, 2022