

WE'RE FINE FREE!



| Read below to learn more.

WHAT DOES "FINE FREE" MEAN?

Rocky River Public Library is no longer charging fines for overdue items. There are no exceptions. Patrons no longer have to worry about financial penalties when returning items to the library.

WHY IS THE LIBRARY ENDING OVERDUE FINES?

Rocky River Public Library is committed to providing accessible services to our community. Removing overdue fines eliminates a barrier and research shows doing so has no negative effect on borrowing practices. In fact, fine free libraries report time and again that after making this change, more patrons use the library, more items are borrowed, and fewer items remain unreturned much beyond the due date. We are looking forward to welcoming back patrons for whom overdue fines were a hardship.

WHEN DID THE LIBRARY STOP CHARGING OVERDUE FINES?

The Library Board of Trustees voted to approve the fine free proposal at their May 28, 2021 meeting. The policy was effective immediately. By July 1, 2021, fine-free configurations were applied to our databases and existing overdue bills on Rocky River Public Library items were canceled.

ARE THERE STILL DUE DATES?

Yes. Our loan periods have not changed. All items have due dates and most are able to be renewed five times. Our circulation staff can answer all of your questions about loan periods and due dates.

IF THERE ARE NO OVERDUE FINES, WILL PEOPLE RETURN ITEMS ON TIME?

Research shows that overdue fines are not as effective as most people think in getting library materials returned. Most people find the existing loan periods and up to five automatic renewals to be more than enough time to finish with materials. In addition, an account with 10 overdues is unable to checkout more materials until the ones they have are returned.

IS THERE A PENALTY FOR KEEPING MATERIALS AS LONG AS SOMEONE WANTS?

As overdue fines do not represent real costs to the library, they are punitive in nature and could be described as a penalty. However, never returning an item does represent a real cost to the library. Our lost item process has not changed. When an item is 21 days overdue, it goes to a "lost" status and the patron is charged the replacement cost of the item. Lost bills are canceled when the items are returned.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT EXISTING OVERDUE BILLS?

We have canceled all existing overdue bills on items owned by Rocky River Public Library. Thousands of patrons in our community have already benefitted.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT OVERDUE ITEMS FROM OTHER CLEVNET LIBRARIES?

Patrons may continue to see overdue fines on items owned by CLEVNET libraries that are not fine free. However, items returned to Rocky River Public Library will not accrue fines. Circulation staff can answer more specific questions.

ARE OTHER CLEVNET OR OHIO LIBRARIES FINE FREE?

Yes. Rocky River Public Library has joined twenty other CLEVNET libraries, along with hundreds of public libraries throughout the state of Ohio and across the country, by ending overdue fines.

HOW WILL THIS AFFECT THE LIBRARY'S BUDGET?

Overdue fines make up a vanishingly small percentage of revenue for the library. Since 2016, we have seen a drop of over 80% in money collected from overdue fines.