

Fine-Free Policy

To make the library more equitable, The Catskill Public Library and Palenville Branch Library will no longer charge late fines on most overdue materials, see below for exceptions. Eliminating fines aligns with our Mission Statement to provide free and open access to materials and services to people of all ages and backgrounds.

Why Go Fine Free?

- **It is 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 accumulate 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. The American Library Association asserts that the imposition of monetary library fines creates a barrier to providing library and information services. To learn more, click [here](#).
- **Late Fines Are Not Effective.** Studies show that small fines have no impact on the return rates of library materials. Those with overdue fines are less likely to visit the library again.
- **Less confusion for patrons.** 83% of Mid-Hudson Library System member libraries are fine-free or partially fine-free. Aligning with our neighboring member libraries creates less confusion for patrons who visit and borrow items from other libraries. For a list of all Mid-Hudson Library system member libraries that are fine free and to read articles relating to this topic click [here](#).

Patron Responsibilities

- We cannot waive fines from other libraries in the Mid-Hudson Library System or fines accrued from Interlibrary Loan Services.
- This policy applies to overdue material fines only. Patrons are still responsible for returning all borrowed library materials in a timely manner. Patrons are also responsible for all fees associated with Lost and Damaged items. For a detailed list, please see our Schedule of fines and fees.
- Patrons will receive a notification 1 week after items are due; after an additional week, the patron's account will be charged for the replacement cost of the item(s). Please contact the library if you are not signed up for email or phone notifications.
- Special collections: patrons will be charged \$5.00 a day for overdue museum passes; after 5 days the pass is considered lost, and the patron will be billed for the total cost posted on the pass. All other overdue special collection items will be fined \$5.00 daily, with a maximum fine of \$25.00.

Resolution: Adopted on March 22, 2023 by unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees of the Catskill Public Library. Effective date June 1, 2023.