

Frequently Asked Questions – Library Members

From the 1st of January, library members will not have to pay fines for overdue items and no existing fines will be collected.

1. Why did the library service remove overdue fines?

The removal of fines is a key aim of the new public library strategy *Our Public Library 2022: inspiring, connecting and empowering communities* which was published jointly by the Department of Rural and Community Development, the County and City Management Association and the Local Government Management Agency and launched by the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring T.D. in June 2018. The strategy states, ***‘The library is a free lifelong resource that should be available to all without barriers or charges. Library charges have been shown to have a detrimental effect on library use by children and the disadvantaged. However, there is little evidence to show they ensure timely returns – rather they may actually dissuade members and users from returning overdue items.***

The elimination of overdue fines is another way for libraries to encourage people who might not regularly use the library to experience what they have to offer.

We are encouraging members of the public to return undamaged, overdue library items to their local libraries. There will be no fines to pay and we would be happy to reactivate your library membership for you to begin using your local library again.

2. Will overdue fines be removed on all materials?

There will be no overdue fines charged on any materials taken out from the library by library members from the 1st of January 2019.

3. Do I still have to pay a fine that was on my account prior to the library service becoming fine free?

All charges on members' accounts as of the 1st of January 2019 will be removed.

4. I just paid off my late fines. Do I get a refund?

No. We do appreciate your responsible use of library materials. This new policy to eliminate overdue fines takes effect on the 1st of January 2019 and previously paid overdue fines will not be refunded.

5. Fines have been removed, so why does my account still have a balance?

Fines cannot be cleared from an account until the overdue item is returned to the library as the library management system does not charge fines to the account until this time. Once an item is returned, the system automatically charges the fine and this can then be cleared. Fines may be cleared on request by a library staff member, or a central clearing will take place once daily.

Overdue fines are being removed in libraries throughout Ireland from 1st January 2019. Fees for lost or damaged adult items will be charged and these will be shown as a balance on a library account.

Kiosks

Kiosks cannot remove fines, so library members who are charged fines at a kiosk will have to go to a member of staff to have them removed.

6. How will the library get people to return borrowed materials?

No fines does not mean no responsibility. You will continue to receive reminders and overdue emails to prompt you to return items to the library. Please return items on or before their due date to allow them to be borrowed by other library users. Please continue to renew your items online, by phone or in person at your local branch.

Please return overdue items once you receive an overdue notice. If there is an issue in returning the item, please contact a library staff member to discuss this.

If you do not either return an item or contact a library staff member to discuss an overdue item before you receive a third reminder, your card will be blocked from taking out or

renewing any further items, including e-books and e-audio books. Borrowing privileges cannot be restored until either the overdue item is returned, or you have made contact with a library staff member to discuss the matter.

7. *When will I receive reminders about returning materials?*

- **3 Days Before Due Date:** Reminder Email
- **1 Day after Due Date:** Reminder Email
- **3 Weeks after Due Date:** Reminder Email
- **9 Weeks after Due Date:** Item considered lost, card borrowing privileges blocked and user requested to present to the library

You can check the details of your membership including whether you have overdue items at any time by logging into your online account.

8. *What happens if I lose or damage a book or other loan item?*

There will be no replacement charge for children's items which have been lost or damaged. Library members under 18 will not be asked to pay replacement costs. You will be asked to pay a replacement charge if the item which has been lost or damaged is an adult item. This cost will be calculated as the purchase price of the item.

Replacement charges can be paid at any library branch, regardless of where the item originated from.

Please note, if you have not notified the library of the loss or damage, your card will be temporarily blocked from borrowing or renewing items, including e-books and e-audio books until you make contact with a library staff member.