

SUBJECT: FINES AND FEES

EFFECTIVE: FEBRUARY 17, 2016

SUPERSEDES: 10/2013

1. PURPOSE:

- A. Library Services establishes a fines and fees schedule in order to encourage timely return of library books and materials and to recover costs associated with providing specific services.

2. POLICY:

- A. Library Services shall maintain a [Fine and Fee Schedule](#) that enumerates various Fines and Fees charged to encourage timely return of loaned materials and to recover costs associated with specific services.
- B. The [Fine and Fee Schedule](#) shall be reviewed biannually or as necessary by Library Administration and the Library Board.
- C. The Board of County Commissioners is the approval authority over the [Fine and Fee Schedule](#) and any modifications.
- D. It is the responsibility of Library Services staff to implement the [Fine and Fee Schedule](#) as approved by the Board of County Commissioners.
- E. Library Supervisors or their authorized designees may, at their discretion, authorize a waiver of overdue fines, lost, or damaged materials fees, or collection service fees on a patron account if the fines were improperly assessed by the Library or if the patron established a hardship as the result of an event beyond the patron's control. Such hardship claims must be supported with appropriate documentation.
- F. Library Supervisors or the highest ranking staff member at any library are authorized by Library Administration to authorize waivers only in accordance with this policy. The reason for each waiver shall be documented on each patron's account and on the Waiver Log.
- G. Any patron account with a balance of greater than \$5 will be suspended from active status. Check-out of library material or use of any library service that requires a library card shall not be permitted until the balance is brought to \$5 or less. Patron accounts with accrued fines not yet posted may renew and check out items. The only exception to this policy is for patrons with fines or fees under \$10.00 who may use of the Internet computers.
- H. Patrons may make partial payments of any amount.
- I. Patrons who dispute fines or fees on their or their dependent's accounts may appeal to the Library Supervisor in accordance with LS 1510, 2. E and F above. If the Library Supervisor does not resolve the dispute, the patron may appeal in writing with pertinent documentation attached, to the Public Service Regional Manager of that library. If the Public Service Regional Manager does not resolve

the dispute, the patron may make a final appeal to the designated Manager who has been delegated by the Library Director, the authority to make final decisions in any patron disputes of fines and fees.

- J. Staff shall create a new account for adults who wish to renew an expired card that has fines or fees incurred as a juvenile. Staff shall put a note in the Juvenile record to ignore the fines or fees and create an association between the old Juvenile account and the account of the parent/guardian of the Juvenile. The old fines or fees shall not be waived.

3. PROCEDURE:

A. Payments

- (1) The following are acceptable methods of payment:
 - (a) Cash
 - (b) Check
 - (c) Money order
 - (d) Debit/Credit card

- (2) A receipt shall be provided for any payment.

B. Waivers

- (1) Library Supervisors or the highest ranking in-charge employee may, at their discretion, authorize a waiver of any of the following if the charges were improperly assessed by the Library or if the patron establishes a hardship as the result of an event beyond the patron's control. See [Attachment B, Fee Waiver Guidelines](#) for allowed and not allowed reasons. A check of the patron record for prior waivers must be conducted before determining whether or not to authorize any waiver.
 - (a) Overdue Fines
 - (b) Lost or Damaged Materials Fees
 - (c) Collection Service Fees
- (2) The Library Supervisor shall document the basis for granting the waiver in the patron record noting any supporting police reports, insurance claims, etc.
- (3) All Waivers shall be recorded on a [Waiver Log \(Attachment A\)](#) for each cash collection site. The entry shall include a brief description of the qualifying event with notation of what documentation was provided. Medical records may be provided by patrons as supporting documentation but no copies of such records are to be made or retained by library staff due to HIPAA privacy rules and regulations.
- (4) The [Waiver Log](#) shall be kept on file electronically for one (1) year by the

Supervisor to provide an audit record for Waivers.

- (5) Scan as a pdf file and attach the *Waiver Reports* to the Daily Report (DR) supporting documentation in the appropriate shared network drive.
- C. Refunds may be issued for payments of lost materials when materials are subsequently returned, in good condition within two (2) years of the date of payment. Patrons must present the receipt or show an e-receipt to receive a refund.
- D. Patron Appeals
- (1) The patron account appeal process shall begin with an oral discussion with the Library Supervisor or designee who will investigate the patron's circumstances in accordance with LS 1510, 2. E and F and take appropriate action. If the patron is not satisfied with the Library Supervisor's resolution the patron may appeal to the Public Service Regional Manager for that library.
 - (2) The patron shall complete a [Fines and Fees Appeal Form \(Attachment C\)](#), attach the relevant documentation, and scan and send to the Public Service Regional Manager. The Public Service Regional Manager will thoroughly investigate the patron's circumstances, review the account history and usage, discuss or question the patron or appropriate staff, etc. and make a decision to grant or deny the appeal within five (5) working days. If the patron is not satisfied with the Public Service Regional Manager's resolution, the patron may ask that the appeal be sent to the designated Manager.
 - (3) The designated Manager shall review the appeal and documentation provided by the patron and Public Service Regional Manager, consult appropriate staff, discuss the circumstances with the patron, etc. and make a final decision to grant or deny the appeal as delegated by the Library Director. The patron shall be notified of the Manager's decision within five (5) working days.
 - (4) Both the Public Service Regional Manager and the designated Manager shall respond to the appellant in writing using form letters available on the staff intranet.

4. AUTHORITY:

Pursuant to Section 5(1) of [Chapter 84-443](#), Laws of Florida, the Library Board has the duty and the responsibility, among others, to serve in a recommending capacity to the Director of Library Services and to the County Administrator in respect to all matters pertaining to the public library.

Approved:
Andrew Breidenbaugh, Director