

Overdue Fines Eliminated

As of Monday, March 30, 2020, the Tipton Public Library will no longer have any fines for overdue items. Fines will no longer prevent you from using library services like Bridges, checking out library materials or using computers. *(Please note that this change is only for overdue fines and not replacement costs for materials which are not returned at all).*

Why

Overdue fines do not work as intended and instead provide a negative interaction between the community and library. Overdue fines:

- Don't change borrowing habits. Their intended purpose is to ensure that items are returned on time. In practice, they do not affect when or if items are returned.
- Are regressive. They provide a higher impact the less someone has available to spend. Libraries strive to provide equal access to all residents, so they work against this idea.
- Cost as much to administer as they provide in income to the library.

Through this process, the library assures the community that literacy, equitable access, and customer service are our top priorities.

Conscience Jar

Library staff have regularly heard that some enjoy paying fines because they know it goes to supporting the library. We strongly appreciate this sentiment but would like to keep it only a positive interaction by not forcing members of our community into it. We will have a Conscience Jar on the front desk if you'd like to donate for things that are late.

Returning Items

So, you may ask why someone would return library items at all? Items checked out from the library will still have a due date and the library's overdue process won't change, there just won't be a fine for things when returned. You'll still get phone calls, emails, postcards, and letters if things are late. If someone still does not return items, the account will be charged for replacement cost – the library is still responsible for maintaining items as public property.

Libraries which have done this already report that incidents of items being slightly overdue may increase a small amount, but things which are long overdue or un-returned decrease as there is no penalty.

Reviewed/approved by the Library Board of Trustees, March 2021