

	THE CORPORATION OF THE COUNTY OF LAMBTON LAMBTON COUNTY LIBRARY POLICY MANUAL			
	Subject:	Overdue Accounts and Write Off Policy	Section F23	Index #01
	Effective Date:	March 1, 2019	Approved By: Lambton County Council	
	Revision Date:	November 1, 2019		
	Drafted on:	November 1, 2019		

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Lambton County Library (the Library) has made all reasonable efforts to minimize the number of outstanding fines and fees before determining fines as uncollectable. The Policy also serves to encourage the return of library materials in a timely manner to provide a more effective Library system for Lambton County Library patrons.

POLICY

The collection of fines is important to Lambton County Library because:

- They encourage the return of shared library resources;
- They reduce patron wait time for materials;
- The revenue off-sets the cost of operating this public service.

Fines are only waived for patrons in extraordinary circumstances by designated staff members in order to ensure equitable treatment of library patrons throughout the County of Lambton.

RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the Manager, Library Services. This responsibility may be delegated to other staff members in the Libraries Department.

DEFINITIONS

"Child / Children" are individuals from birth up to and including age sixteen (16).

"Extraordinary Circumstances" are situations that are out of a patron's control which prevents him / her from paying fines that have accrued on his / her library card. This could include, but is not limited to, hospitalization, property damage, natural disaster, death, and family emergencies. Circumstances are considered by Library staff and may result in the waiving of fines and fees from accounts.

"Fees" are charges related to lost materials, service fees, items or room rentals.

"Fines" are daily charges that are applied to a membership card after a borrowed item is not returned by its due date.

"Parent" is any person who is either the natural, adoptive, foster parent or legal guardian of the child.

"Write Off" is the cancellation of a fee or fine that has been deemed uncollectable from a patron's account.

REGULATIONS

1. Collection

1.1. Employee Responsibility

- 1.1.1. It is the responsibility of front-line Library staff to collect any and all fines or fees on a patron's account.
- 1.1.2. Any requests to waive fines will be forwarded to the Assistant Library Supervisor for consideration.

2. Notification

- 2.1. Library card holders will be notified of outstanding account balances by front-line Library staff when they seek service.
- 2.2. Library card holders will receive an invoice when their account balance reaches \$10.
- 2.3. Invoices will be issued to all library patrons who have outstanding fees on their accounts in September of each year, regardless of the dollar value.

3. Overdue Collection Methods

- 3.1. Lambton County Library reserves the right to use the services of a collection agency (for patrons 18 years of age and older) to assist in the timely retrieval of fines and fees.
- 3.2. Patron accounts will be referred to a collection agency after three unsuccessful attempts by Lambton County Library to collect the funds. At such a time, any further notification regarding outstanding fees / fines will come from the collection agency.
- 3.3. An administrative fee will be added to a patron's account for referral to a collection agency.

4. Waiving Fines and Fees

4.1. Employee Responsibility

- 4.1.1. Patrons requesting to have fines or fees waived from their accounts are required to complete a Request for Fee / Fine Removal Form.
- 4.1.2. The Request for Fee / Fine Removal Form will be reviewed by an Assistant Library Supervisor who will make a determination.
- 4.1.3. All decisions to waive fines or fees will be made in accordance with Lambton County Library policy.
- 4.1.4. Library staff may provide insight concerning the request to the Assistant Library Supervisor when considering the waiving of a fine.
- 4.1.5. The Assistant Library Supervisor will review the request and make a determination which will be forwarded to the Library Office Clerks for action.
- 4.1.6. The Library Office Clerks, Executive Assistant / Supervisor, Administrative Support Services, and Technical Services Supervisor can aid in the provision of historical data related to the borrower from the Library's Integrated Library System (ILS).

5. Limitations

- 5.1. Fines / fees will not be waived by front-line Library staff.
- 5.2. Fines / fees proven to be the result of an error by Lambton County Library will be waived.
- 5.3. Patrons with fines and fees exceeding \$14.99 will have their library borrowing privileges suspended.

6. Extraordinary Circumstances

- 6.1. Library fines and fees will only be waived in the event of extraordinary circumstances or if the fines and fees were a result of an error made by Lambton County Library.

7. Children's Materials

- 7.1. Children's materials will not accrue fines, but will accrue fees.
- 7.2. The parent is responsible for any fees that are applied to children's materials borrowed on the child's account. This includes fines on all materials not categorized as children's that have been placed on the child's account.
- 7.3. Replacement fees are updated annually in The Corporation of the County of Lambton Services and Fees Schedule.

8. Payment Plans

- 8.1. Assistant Library Supervisors may suggest patrons establish payment plans.
- 8.2. Payment plans may only be established by Library Office Clerks and / or the Executive Assistant / Administrative Services Supervisor.
- 8.3. Library Office Clerks will establish payment plans for individuals to pay fines and fees in more manageable amounts on a regular payment schedule.
- 8.4. Payment plans will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- 8.5. Missed payment plan payments will result in referral to a collection agency.

9. Patron's Record

- 9.1. Each time the Assistant Library Supervisor, Library Office Clerk, or Executive Assistant / Administrative Services Supervisor waives a fee or fine, it will be recorded on the patron's account in the Integrated Library System (ILS) to a maximum of three occurrences.
- 9.2. Subsequent requests for a waived fee or fine will not be permitted unless in the event of an error conducted by Lambton County Library.

10. Write-Offs

- 10.1. All reasonable efforts to collect fines and fees must be made before any consideration of a write-off is made.
- 10.2. Accounts receivable may be written off for accounting purposes only and do not absolve a patron from the requirements to pay a fine.
- 10.3. Fines that have been uncollectable for two years from the date of the last fine imposed will be considered a write-off in accordance with The Corporation of the County of Lambton Records Management Policy (A12.01).
- 10.4. In the event a death certificate has been issued for an individual, any remaining fines and fees on their membership card will be considered a write-off.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

The Corporation of the County of Lambton Records Management Policy (A12.01)
The Corporation of the County of Lambton Services and Fees Schedule
Lambton County Library Request for Fee / Fine Removal Form
Lambton County Library Circulation Policy - Schedule A

POLICY HISTORY

REVISION	DATE	PREPARED BY
Revised	November 20, 2019	Manager, Library Services
Created	April 12, 1995	Chief Librarian