



Brighton  
District  
Library

# WE ARE NOW FINE-FREE!



## ELIMINATING OVERDUE FINES: IMPROVING ACCESS TO YOUR LIBRARY

### BACKGROUND

- Fine-free policies have been gaining momentum and Michigan libraries have been discussing this topic in depth for over a year. A list of fine-free libraries can be viewed at [endlibraryfines.info](http://endlibraryfines.info).
- During 2021, Library Staff and the Library Board of Trustees had ongoing discussions about going fine-free in Brighton. We analyzed data and finances, read articles, attended workshops, and spoke with other area libraries that are fine-free.
- On November 23, 2021 the Library Board of Trustees voted to eliminate overdue fines for most Brighton District Library materials.

### IMPACT OF OVERDUE FINES

**25%** 25% of Brighton District Library cardholders had overdue fines.

18% of cardholders with fines were kids or teens under 18 years old.

### WHY?

Effective January 1, 2022, Brighton District Library will stop charging overdue fines for Brighton materials. This move ensures that our Library is providing equal access to information, services and opportunities that inspire, enrich, and enhance the quality of life for all.

The Library is committed to promoting literacy for all ages and, by eliminating overdue fines, we are making sure we are the place for Brighton residents to read, discover and connect without barriers.

We know that even with the best intentions, life sometimes gets in the way – work schedules change; kids get sick; it snows. Overdue fines can become frustrating or burdensome enough for some to avoid borrowing from the Library. The Library is confident that ending overdue fines will not affect our funding or ability to have borrowed materials returned. We want all Brighton residents to be able to access our materials regardless of ability to pay overdue fines. Equal access to all Library services leads to a curious and engaged community, benefiting everyone in the Brighton District Library service area.

It's a new year and a new chapter! From all of us here at the Library, we thank you for your continued patronage and support.

- Cindy Mack, Library Director

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## FINES ARE NOT A SIGNIFICANT SOURCE OF REVENUE

Revenue from overdue fines has been steadily declining due to improved technology and notification systems. With the implementation of automatic renewals last year, fine revenue declined even more significantly. Overdue fines make up less than 1% of the Library's annual revenue collected. In 2021, the overdue fine revenue collected was approximately \$6,000, or .26% of the Library's budget.

## PEOPLE STILL RETURN ITEMS AT A FINE-FREE LIBRARY

- Library patrons are still expected to return or renew items on or before the due date.
- Accounts are automatically blocked from further checkout when one or more items reach 21 days overdue.
- Replacement fees will still be charged for lost or damaged items. Items are considered lost at 21 days overdue.
- Studies show no difference in return rates between fine-free libraries and those with overdue fines.

## FAQ

### What if I misplaced an item and can't return it? Did the Library eliminate replacement fees?

You are still responsible for fees associated with the replacement of lost or damaged materials on your account. Items are considered lost on the 21st day overdue and users will be billed replacement fees for those items at that point. Damaged materials are also assessed a replacement fee. If the item is not paid for or returned, the account will be referred to a collection agency and a non-negotiable \$10 fee is assessed to cover costs we incur pursuing collection action.

### What happens if I don't return my items by the due date?

Your card will be blocked when one or more items reach 21 days overdue.

### What about mobile hotspots, Chromebooks, Kindles, or Library of Things materials?

Due to the high replacement costs, these items will still incur a fine of \$5 per day overdue.

### I didn't really lose these items; can I still bring them back?

Yes! Lost fees will automatically be removed from your account and you'll be back to borrowing.

### What about old overdue fines?

Overdue fines assessed for late materials belonging to Brighton District Library have been eliminated and removed from accounts as of January 1, 2022. However, patrons who have lost or damaged materials will still need to settle their account to reinstate borrowing privileges. If you have overdue fines for materials borrowed from another library, those fines will remain on your account. The easiest way to find out if you have a remaining balance is to login to your account at [catalog.tln.lib.mi.us](http://catalog.tln.lib.mi.us) or visit the Library.