



## ST. JOHNS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

[www.sjcpls.org](http://www.sjcpls.org)

### **Policy Title: OVERDUE, DAMAGED, AND LOST MATERIALS**

#### **Section 01. Rationale for Policy.**

St. Johns County, Florida, through its Board of County Commissioners, implements an overall County-wide policy concerning overdue, damaged, lost books, periodicals, movies, and other loaned materials. The rationale for implementing such a policy is noted as follows: 1) establishing an overall County-wide, uniform administrative library policy associated with overdue, damaged, missing/lost books, periodicals, movies, and other loaned materials (from this point forward collectively referred to as “loaned materials”; 2) providing both the Patrons of the St. Johns County Public Library System, and the public at-large, with an overall written, consistent, and uniform policy (from this point forward referred to as “Uniform Library Policy” or “ULP”

#### **Section 02. Definitions.**

For the purposes of this Policy, the following terms, phrases, words and their derivations shall have the meaning herein given, unless the context clearly indicates that another meaning is intended. When not inconsistent with the context, words used in the present tense include the future, words in the plural number include the singular number, and words in the singular number include the plural number. The word “shall” is always mandatory and not merely directory.

- a. *BCC* means Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida.
- b. *Branch Library* means any library located within and serving St. Johns County, and a part of the St. Johns County Public Library System.
- c. *County* means St. Johns County, Florida.
- d. *County Library System* means the Public Library System serving St. Johns County, Florida.
- e. *Damaged* means loaned materials returned to the Library System in a condition that is worse (beyond normal wear) than originally loaned.
- f. *Debt Collection* means a third party collection agency in business to collect debt on behalf of the library.
- g. *Due Date* means the final date that loaned material may be returned to the Library without a late fee/overdue fee being imposed.
- h. *Library* means any or all of the branches of the St. Johns County Public Library System.
- i. *Library Director* means the Executive Director of the St. Johns County Public Library System. The Library Director shall serve as the chief administrative officer for the St. Johns County Public Library System.
- j. *Lost* means any loaned material that is not returned after a specified amount of time. For movies, items

- k. are set to “lost” upon the 31st day overdue. All other items are set to “lost” upon the 51st day overdue.
- l. *Overdue* means any loaned material that is not returned to the Library by the Due Date.
- m. *Patron* means a user of the St. Johns County Public Library System.
- n. *Privilege* means the ability to checkout loaned materials owned or maintained by the St. Johns County Public Library System, or otherwise have access to other resources owned, maintained, or offered by the St. Johns County Public Library System.
- o. *Recognized Library Card* means a card or other equivalent device issued by the St. Johns County Public Library System, or recognized by the St. Johns County Public Library System (which may include a Library Card issued by another County or jurisdiction located within the State of Florida), in order to allow a Patron to checkout loaned materials owned or maintained by the St. Johns County Public Library System, or otherwise have access to other resources owned, maintained, or offered by the St. Johns County Public Library System.
- p. *St. Johns County Public Library System* means the collection of Libraries, including all support and administrative staff that makes up the St. Johns County, Florida Public Library System.
- q. *ULP* means the Uniform Library Policy.

### **Section 03. Responsibility of Patron.**

The following notes the responsibilities of each Patron:

1. The Patron is responsible for having his/her library card with him/her at the time of borrowing library materials or using library equipment.
2. The Patron is responsible for returning items on or before the due date.
3. The Patron is responsible for returning items in the same condition that they were checked out. The Patron assumes responsibility for any damages that may occur during the use of library materials.
4. The Patron is responsible for seeing that his/her card is used only by the authorized cardholder whose signature appears on the back of the card. If a cardholder chooses to allow other patrons to use his/her card, the cardholder remains responsible for items checked out on the card.
5. The Patron is responsible for reporting a lost or stolen card as soon as he/she is aware that the card is lost or stolen. The Patron is responsible for items charged out on the card until it is reported lost or stolen.
6. The Patron is responsible for reporting to the Library any change of name, address, email address or phone number.
7. If items are not returned on time, returned damaged, or are lost the Patron is subject to fines and/or replacement charges. *The Library is not liable for damage to machines used to play or view non-print items.*
8. The Patron is responsible for adhering to, and complying with, the Patron Code of Conduct. Failure of Patron to abide by, and/or comply with the responsibilities listed in items 1 through 7 above will subject the Patron to forfeiture of privileges until the violation is cured, and/or resolved in a manner deemed acceptable by Manager of the Branch Library.

#### **Section 04. Imposition of Fines, Fees, Charges**

Not later than March 1 of each year, the Library Director of the St. Johns County Public Library System shall prepare and deliver a recommended/proposed schedule of Fees, Fines, and/or Charges that should be imposed, under certain conditions, to Patrons. Annually, the BCC shall adopt a schedule of Fees, Fines, and/or Charges that are imposed, under certain conditions, to Patrons.

The most recent schedule of Fees, Fines, and/or Charges is posted on the library website at [www.sjcpls.org](http://www.sjcpls.org). No person and/or entity, other than the BCC, or a person/position, delegated by the BCC, has the authority to waive the imposition of any properly imposed fine, fee, and/or charge. The BCC has delegated such waiver authority to the following persons/positions: 1) Library Director of the St. Johns County Public Library System; and 2) Manager or Supervisor of any Branch Library. Such waiver authority also includes the authority to adjust fines, fees, and/or charges, as noted in this ULP.

#### **Section 05. Record of Fines, Fees, Charges.**

On a daily basis, the Manager or Supervisor in charge of each Branch Library shall track, record, and/or log all fines, fees, and/or charges that are received by that Branch Library.

At a very minimum, the following categories of fines, fees, and/or charges shall be tracked, recorded, and/or logged on a separate basis: 1) fines collected on overdue loaned materials; 2) fees collected for photocopying and printing; 3) fees collected for faxing (facsimile processing); 4) fees for other services provided by Library staff; 5) charges collected on lost loaned materials; 6) charges collected on damaged loaned materials; 6) any other fines, fees, and/or charges permitted, imposed, and collected by each Branch Library; and 7) any subsequent BCC authorized fines, fees, and/or charges.

On a monthly basis, a record of systemwide fines, fees, charges, credits and waivers will be generated within the Technical Services Department and forwarded to County Administration.

#### **Section 06. Payment of Fines, Fees and Charges.**

Acceptable payment types include: 1) Cash 2) Personal Check with name and current address imprinted (for valid library cardholders only) 3) Money Order; 4) Traveler's Check; 5) Credit or Debit Card – online only.

Fines, fees and charges may be paid in person during business hours at any St. Johns County Library Branch, by U.S. Mail for checks or money orders, or online anytime at [www.sjcpls.org](http://www.sjcpls.org).

#### **Section 07. Adjustment of Fines, Fees, Charges.**

The Manager of a Branch Library, or supervisor in charge of a Branch Library, may adjust fines, fees, and/or charges imposed on a Patron for the following reasons: 1) a Patron returns lost loaned material in undamaged condition to the Library; 2) a Patron is due a refund for an incorrect or improper fine, fee, and/or charge; 3) Replacement cost of an item is different from Default cost of item; or 4) Staff error.

#### **Section 08. Waiver of Fines, Fees, Charges.**

Fines up to \$25.00 may be waived by a Branch Manager or supervisor in charge at a branch for extenuating

legitimate circumstances only, as defined in staff procedures manual. All disputes of fines over \$25.00 must be submitted in writing to the Library Director for review. All disputes of fines over \$50.00 will be forwarded to the St. Johns County Administrator or BCC for review. Various circumstances for waiving of fines might include death, hospitalization, or unusual hardship. Parents, grandparents or legal guardians are responsible for overdue fines accrued and material lost or damaged by minors. The maximum overdue fine for each item is \$5.00 per check out. Except as noted in this Section, and authorized by the BCC, no other person/individual/entity may waive any fine, fee, and/or charge of one or more patrons.

**Section 09. Revocation of Patron Privileges.**

A Patron’s Privileges within the County Library System shall be revoked under the following circumstances with regard to overdue, lost, or damaged materials:

- Patrons who have reached fine and fee charges of \$10.00 may not borrow any items, use public access computers, or use any other library equipment until payment is made on the account to bring the account balance under \$10.00.
- Patrons who have reached fine and fee charges of \$25.00 and thereby been referred to debt collection may not borrow any items, use public access computers, or use any other library equipment until the account balance is rectified. An additional fee will be charged to accounts sent to debt collection.
- Patrons who have fines over a year old will have privileges suspended until their account balance is brought to \$00.00.

**Section 10. Restoration of Patron Privileges.**

Upon satisfactory resolution (as deemed by the Manager of the Branch Library, or designated employee) of the circumstance that gave rise to the revocation of the Patron’s Privileges, such Patron’s Privileges within the County Library System shall be restored as soon as possible (immediately, if at all possible, and in any case within three business days).

**Section 11: Loan Periods:**

- New Books 14 days
- High Demand Books 14 days
- Other Books 21 days
- Audio Books 21 days
- Music CDs 14 days
- Magazines, Comic Books 7 days
- Equipment 7 days
- E-content Varies according to online vendor platform
- Movies:
  - New and high-demand Feature Films 3 days
  - Feature Films & Nonfiction Films 7 days