



Fine Free FAQ's

Library Mission Statement

The mission of the Elkhart Lake Public Library is to provide quality materials, programs, and services in an environment, which is respectful and welcoming, to fulfill the informational, educational, recreational and cultural needs of the community it serves.

What does it mean to be fine free?

The Elkhart Lake Public Library will no longer charge a fine per day, per item overdue for materials checked out at the Elkhart Lake Public Library.

Why would a Library go fine free?

Fines create a barrier, often to the most vulnerable in our community who need our resources. Elkhart Lake Public Library has been in the process of eliminating fines by changing our policies, longer loan period, adding a grace period to all materials, adding an additional renewal, and offering text and email reminders. We have reduced our fine income by 45% over the last 5 years. Going fine free is the next step.

Are other libraries going fine free?

There is a national movement of public libraries going fine free or partially fine free (children's materials especially). Elkhart Lake Public Library will be joining two other Sheboygan County libraries, Sheboygan Falls Public Library and Kohler Public Library, that have been successfully fine free for many years.

What is the difference between a fine and a bill?

A fine is the per day charge for overdue Library materials. A bill is the retail cost to repurchase the item for an item returned damaged or for an item that was never returned. A service fee of \$5.00 per item is added to the bill for processing, cataloging and postage. We will continue to bill for damaged and unreturned materials.

What happens when people don't return materials on time with a fine free policy?

If the item becomes overdue or is not returned, the patron will be billed. Once the item comes back in good condition, the bill is removed, the replacement cost will be waived. Non-return on library materials is considered theft and occasionally it is necessary to request assistance from the Elkhart Lake Police Department.

Will the library still get their materials back?

Yes! We have not been able to find any library in the nation that reversed a fine free policy adoption. Sheboygan Falls and Kohler libraries report their rate of return is about the same as those libraries charging fines.

Will you erase old fines?

Yes! We have eliminated all outstanding accrued overdue fines charged by the Elkhart Lake Public Library. Be aware that we will not waive fines and fees charged by other libraries in the Monarch Library System.

What if I have an Elkhart Lake Public Library card but check out materials at another library?

You may accrue fines if you fail to return materials on time. The loan rule of the library at which you checked out the materials is the policy applied for overdue fines and bills. Check with the other library about their policy.

What about old bills for books I didn't return and are still on my account?

If you have an account in arrears due to lost or damaged books and would like to use the library, we would like to work with you. Please contact us.