Library System of Lancaster County Circulation Policy

General Statement

The Public Libraries in Lancaster County, while independent, cooperate to provide the best possible service for local communities. The Member Libraries of the Library System of Lancaster County (LSLC) have a wide variety of materials, in many different formats, available to loan. To provide for efficient and equitable circulation of materials, LSLC sets forth the following policies. Some procedures and practices vary among Libraries. Direct questions to individual Libraries.

Glossary of Terms

The term “Holds” refers to books or other Library materials which a Library cardholder requests to have reserved for them for pick up at a specific Library.

The term “ILS” refers to the integrated Library system that LSLC uses to maintain, monitor, and report circulation statistics, overdue notices, billings and balances, user registration records, and inventory control.

The term “LSLC Member Libraries” refers to the Independent Member Libraries of the Library System of Lancaster County, their branches, and staff.

The terms “Library” or “Member Library” refers to any one of the Independent Member Libraries that comprise the Library System.

The term “Minor” refers to any individual under the age of 18 years.

The term "OSR" refers to online self-registration. Certain applicants may obtain a temporary, limited-use library card through OSR.

The term “Owning Library” refers to the Library which owns a book or other item. Each independent Member Library of the Library System of Lancaster County selects and owns all books and other items in its collection.

The term “Staff” refers to Library employees

Library card Policy

1. **Eligibility**: Library cards for the Library System of Lancaster County (LSLC) are available to people of any age.
    a. Library cards are issued at no charge to residents of Lancaster County
    b. Pennsylvania residents outside of Lancaster County are eligible for a LSLC Library card, as outlined in the Statewide Library card Program.
        i. Persons who live in a municipality that is served by a state-aided public Library are issued a Library card at no charge. Eligible municipalities are listed on the claimed municipalities tab on the Library service areas spreadsheet.
        ii. Persons who live in areas unserved by the PA Statewide Library card Program will be issued a card for a $25 annual fee. Unserved areas are listed in the unclaimed municipalities tab on the Library service areas spreadsheet.

c. Persons who live outside of Pennsylvania will be issued a card for a $25 annual fee.

2. **Application & Registration**: To obtain a Library card, a person submits a Library card application, either online (for a temporary Online Self Registration - OSR - card) or in person (for all other types of cards), and provides proof of identity and residency.
    a. The following information will be collected and saved as part of registration for a Library card:
        i. Name
        ii. Address
        iii. Telephone number
        iv. Municipality of residence
        v. School District
    b. The following will be requested at the time of registration, but will be **optional** on the part of the patron:
        i. E-mail address
        ii. Electronic photo for patron record
        iii. Gender
    c. A person may present any one of the following as proof of identity. Originals and digital images/photographs are acceptable. (When parent or guardian is present, proof of identity and address for a minor's parent or guardian fulfills the proof of identity and address requirement.)
        i. A valid driver's license or State ID
        ii. Any of the following unexpired government-issued IDs with a permanently affixed photograph of the person: Certificate of Citizenship/Naturalization, Military ID, or Permanent Resident Card.
        iii. An unexpired student ID card or employee ID card with a permanently affixed photograph of the person
        iv. A current or expired Passport
    d. A person must present one of the following as proof of address if the address on their ID is not current. Originals, printed copies/photocopies, and digital images/photographs are all acceptable forms for proof of address documents.
        i. A bill addressed to the person and dated in the last three months.
        ii. A property tax bill
        iii. Working papers
        iv. A current lease or deed
        v. Valid Lancaster County college / university ID or other school ID
        vi. Inquire at your local Library if you are unable to provide any of these proofs of address. Some Libraries may accept other forms of mail addressed to the person at their current address and dated in the last three months as proof of address.
    e. Inquire at the desk if you are a visitor, nonresident, or cannot provide current proof of address. Individual LSLC Member Libraries may offer various options for card registration.

3. **Types of Library cards**: Library cards are issued with varying registration and borrowing conditions and privileges.
    a. **Full Access Library card for Adults Aged 18 and Older**
        i. May borrow circulating items and access electronic resources.
    b. **Full Access Library card for Minors**
        i. A child under the age of 14 years must have the Library card application form signed by a parent or legal guardian who assumes responsibility for overdue fines and lost or damaged materials incurred by their usage. Unless compelled by law, Libraries do not release account information without permission from the account owner even when the

account owner is a minor. (See also Privacy and Confidentiality Policy below). Parents and guardians are responsible for guiding, approving, and monitoring the materials their children or wards borrow through personal interaction with the child. Minors aged 14 to 17 may obtain a library card without parent signature.

ii. May borrow circulating items and access electronic resources.

iii. Some independent LSLC Member Libraries offer limited collections that may only be checked out by cardholders aged 18 and older.

c. **Online Self Registration (OSR) Cards**: A temporary, limited-use Library card number may be obtained through OSR. Applicants may obtain their OSR number here.

i. Are available to residents of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania aged 14 and older.

ii. May be used to borrow eBooks and eAudiobooks, access the Library's electronic resources, and place holds on physical Library items. Virtual cards cannot be used to borrow physical Library items or to use public access computers in Libraries.

iii. To upgrade to a Full Access Library card, patrons must visit a local Library, complete a paper application and produce proof of identity and address. (This must be completed prior to picking up any items placed on hold using an OSR Number.)

d. **Institutional Card:** Some LSLC Member Libraries offer institutional Library cards, cards that are issued to a Lancaster County organization that assumes responsibility for all borrowed materials.

i. The Library card application must be accompanied by a letter on the letterhead of the organization applying for the card, accepting responsibility for all borrowed materials and signed by a director of the organization.

ii. Some Libraries may offer special extended loan periods upon request to institutional cardholders. Inquire at your local Library for details.

e. **Welcome Cards**: Some LSLC Member Libraries may offer the option of a temporary, limited-use Library card to visitors, nonresidents, college students, individuals who cannot provide current proof of address, and for other special circumstances. The Welcome Card allows the cardholder to check out items (with some restrictions), use Library computers with a signed Internet Use Agreement, and access online resources and digital items. Welcome Cards:

i. Can only be used to check out 3 items at a time owned by the Library that issued the welcome card.

ii. Cannot be used to place holds. (Some LSLC Member Libraries offer the option for Welcome Card Holders to place holds on that Library's items only. Inquire at a Library to learn local policies.)

iii. Cannot be used to place interLibrary loan requests.

4. **Expiration and Renewal of Library cards**

a. Expiration

i. *Full Access Library cards*:

1. Lancaster County Residents and cardholders who live in areas served by the PA Statewide Library card Program: Expire and must be renewed every three years.
2. Pennsylvania residents who live in areas unserved by the PA Statewide Library card Program and Library cardholders who live outside of Pennsylvania: Expire after one year and may be renewed after the $25 annual fee is paid.
3. Cards that are inactive and which do not have fines or materials checked out to them may be deleted from the ILS after 24 months. Library cardholders whose accounts have been deleted must fill out a new Library card application form to get a new Library card.

ii. *OSR Cards*: Expire after 3 months and are non-renewable and non-recoverable.

iii. *Welcome Cards*: Expire after 3 months and are renewable.
iv. *Institutional Cards*: Expire one year after they were issued and are renewable at the discretion of the Library that issued the card.

b. Renewal

i. Library cards expire to ensure that Library accounts (including addresses, phone numbers, and emails) are kept up to date.
ii. Visit your local library to renew your library card. Contact your library for a three-month extension if you cannot get to your local library.

5. **Use of the Library card**
    a. Full access Library cards may be used at any public Library that is a member of the Library System of Lancaster County and Shuts Environmental Library.
    b. Borrowing privileges may be suspended for several reasons, including, but not limited to: failure to return overdue materials, failure to pay overdue fines, failure to pay for lost or damaged materials, or having one's Library privileges revoked (temporarily or permanently) for failure to abide by a Library's code of conduct.
    c. Library patrons are responsible for notifying any Member Library about changes of residency, email address, and phone number within 30 days of the change.
6. **Lost or Stolen Cards**
    a. It is the cardholder's responsibility to immediately report a lost or stolen card to an LSLC Library. Upon receipt of a report of a lost or stolen card, the library will put a block on the account. The cardholder may visit an LSLC library to obtain a replacement card with a new library card number.
    b. Library cardholders are responsible for Library materials checked out on their card until it is reported lost or stolen.
    c. Inquire at a Member Library if unknown materials appear on your account after it was lost or stolen.
    d. Library cards may be replaced for $1.00.

Loan and Renewals Policy

1. **Checkouts**
    a. Library patrons shall present their Library card or valid ID at checkout. (Scanned images of the Library card, barcode, or ID on personal devices are also acceptable.)
    b. In the absence of a Library card in hand, a Library patron may not use another person's Library account to check out (even if the other person is a member of the household) *unless that cardholder has provided a signed release form provided by a Library*. (See Privacy and Confidentiality Policy, below).
2. **Loan Periods**
    a. Most items circulate for two weeks. Appendix I provides loan times for most items. Special collections may vary. Check with the owning Library for details.
    b. Due dates are assigned at checkout based on established loan periods and closure dates, which vary by Library.
3. **Checkout Limits**
    a. Total items checked out may not exceed 99 items per Library account. Some Libraries may have loan limits on certain collections. Inquire at the owning Library.
4. **Loan Renewals**
    a. Eligible items may be renewed. Renewal may be done at a Member Library circulation desk, by phone, or online.

i. To renew at a Library, cardholders should present the Library card on which the items were checked out, the items they wish to renew, or a valid photo ID. (Scanned images of the Library card, barcode, or ID on personal devices are also acceptable.)
ii. In the absence of the Library card, items in hand, or a valid photo ID, a patron may renew materials after accurately confirming the name, birth date, and address listed on their Library account; however, no receipt will be provided, nor will any information about the titles that are checked out, other than the number of items renewed and their new due date(s).
iii. To renew by phone, cardholders should provide their Library card number. Without the Library card number, cardholders may only renew after accurately confirming the name, birth date, and address listed on their Library account. If the cardholder does not provide their Library card number, no information about the titles that are checked out other than the number of items renewed and their new due date(s) will be provided.
iv. Internet Renewal is available by logging in to the ***My Account*** feature in the Library System of Lancaster County Online Catalog: https://search.lancasterLibraries.org/

b. Items may be renewed two times, with some exceptions. See ***Appendix I*** for details.
c. If you are unable to renew your items and cannot return your items on time, please call your local Library. Some reasons an item may not be renewed are: another borrower has requested the item; that type of material is not eligible for renewal; you already renewed the item the maximum number of times; or, because overdue fines on your record are over the limit.

Holds Policy

1. **Placing Holds**
   a. Eligible library cardholders may place requests ('holds') on up to five items at a time from LSLC member Libraries.
   b. Holds may be placed online by logging in at https://search.lancasterLibraries.org/ by phone, or with the assistance of a Library staff member at the desk.
   c. Not all items are eligible for holds, including new items owned by Libraries other than the patron's home Library and items in special collections or formats. The owning Library determines an item's hold eligibility.
2. **Holds Pickup**
   a. When the items are ready for pickup, the patron will be notified via email address or phone number on their Library account.
   b. Patrons have seven days to pick up requested items, with the exception of passes, which must be picked up within four days. Holds which are not picked up within that period will be cancelled and put back into circulation for other individuals to borrow..

Fines and Fees Policy

1. **Fine and Fee Schedule**: is presented in ***Appendix I***. For InterLibrary Loans, see InterLibrary Loan Borrowing Policy.
   a. Lost and Damaged items
      i. *Lost Items*: Lost item charges equal the replacement fee/price listed in the ILS record for that item. (An item's owning Library may charge additional fees. Inquire at the owning Library.)
      ii. *Damaged items:* Fees for damaged items, items requiring extensive cleaning, or items with missing parts/pieces are at the discretion of the owning Library – up to full replacement cost for the item may be charged.
      iii. Any questions about replacement fees or damaged item fees should be directed to the item's owning Library.

iv. Replacement of lost or damaged item may not be provided in lieu of paying the replacement cost unless express permission of the owning Library has been received in advance of the replacement item.

2. **Courtesy Reminders and Overdue Notices:** Library cardholders are responsible for the timely return of items checked out to their accounts. Library cardholders are responsible for associated fees for items returned late or in a damaged condition, or which are lost. Libraries send courtesy reminders on the following schedule when possible.
    a. *Courtesy Reminders (sent two days before items are due)* listing upcoming due dates can be provided to patrons who provide a valid email address and who do not opt out of receiving email notifications.
    b. *First Notice at 2 Weeks*: A first overdue notice will be sent to the most recent address or a valid email address listed in the Library records for the patron account when the item is 2 weeks overdue. The notice will include a list of overdue materials.
    c. *Second Notice, Bill for Replacement at 4 Weeks*: The second notice is sent when the item is 4 weeks overdue. This is a bill for the price/replacement fee listed on the ILS record for that item. If the billed items are found and returned, the cardholder need only pay the overdue fines, unless the owning library refers the delinquent account to a collection agency and charges additional fees.
3. **Payment of Fines**: Fines and fees can be paid at any Library in Lancaster County or online by logging in at: https://search.lancasterLibraries.org/. Fines under $3.00 are not eligible for online credit card payment.
4. **Enforcement of Overdue Fines / Financial Liability:**
    a. Library accounts with fines and/or fees totaling $6.00 or more will result in the suspension of borrowing privileges and access to online resources until fines/fees are paid such that the balance is below $6.00. Library cardholders must pay their fines/fees down to below $6.00 to check out materials and access online resources again.
    b. Some Libraries refer delinquent accounts to collection agencies.

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

1. **The Law**
    a. LSLC and its Member Libraries comply with Pennsylvania State Law, which states that: “Records related the circulation of the Library materials which contain the names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of the State Library or any local Library which is established or maintained under any law of the Commonwealth or the Library of a university, college or educational institution chartered by the Commonwealth or the Library of any public school or branch reading room, deposit station or agency operated in connection therewith, shall be confidential and shall not be made available to anyone except by a court order in a criminal proceeding.” (PA State Law 24 P.S. Section 4428.) This confidentiality policy applies equally to adults and minors. When an adult requests the records of a child, the Library will respond only if the child consents to the request.
2. **Guiding Principle**
    a. LSLC and its Member Libraries maintain confidentiality of circulation records because: The ability "…to read, consider, and develop ideas and beliefs free from observation or unwanted surveillance by the government or others – is the bedrock foundation for intellectual freedom. Privacy…enables Library users to select, access, and consider information and ideas without fear of embarrassment, judgment, punishment, or ostracism. A lack of privacy in what one reads …can have a significant chilling effect upon Library users… hereby impairing free access to ideas…” ("Privacy." *ALA*, www.ala.org/advocacy/privacy. Accessed 29 May 2025.)

3. **Access to Library Accounts and Library Account Information**
    a. Use of a Library card/Library account - including checking out items, renewing items, and picking up holds - is restricted to the patron who owns that Library card/account.
    b. Information about Library accounts – including items checked out, fines, contact information, holds – is restricted to the patron who owns that Library card/account.
    c. This applies equally to adults and minors. See special provisions below.
4. **Special Considerations for Library cardholders who are Minors**
    a. Unless compelled by law, Libraries and Library staff are not permitted to release account information to a third party without permission from the account owner, even when the account owner is a minor.
    b. A child under the age of 14 years must have the Library card application form signed by a parent or legal guardian who assumes responsibility for ensuring that fines and fees are paid. Unless compelled by law, Libraries do not release account information without permission from the account owner even when the account owner is a minor. Parents and guardians are responsible for guiding, approving, and monitoring the materials their children or wards borrow through personal interaction with the child.
5. **Special Permissions**
    a. Library cardholders (both adults and minors) who so desire may grant permission to another individual or individuals (related or unrelated) to pick up their holds. Permission must initially be given in writing (by signing a release form provided by a Library), may be revoked by the Library cardholder at any time, and must be confirmed or revoked each time the Library card is renewed. The Library cardholder remains responsible for all items and fines/fees checked out to their account, even if picked up/checked out by a third party.
    b. Other options for special permissions (for example, allowing a cardholder to give permission to another person to check out and renew items and their pay fines after signing a release form) may be available at some Libraries. These special permissions/provisions are applicable only at that Library. Inquire at a Library for details.
    c. Some procedures, practices, and forms used to give permissions vary from Library to Library. Inquire at a Library for details.

Appendix I: Loan Periods, Renewals, and Fines

Item	Loan Period	Number of Renewals Allowed	Fine per Day Late	Maximum Fine Per Item
Adult/Young Adult (YA)* Print (Regular, Large Print, Paperback)	2 weeks	2	$0.30	$5.10
Adult/YA* Audio, Music	2 weeks	2	$0.30	$5.10
Adult/YA* Video (including sets)	2 weeks	2	$0.30	$5.10
Adult/YA* Periodicals	2 weeks	2	$0.30	$5.10
Adult/YA* Specialty Items (Kits, Games, Toys, Equipment, Video Games, and other special items)	2 weeks	1	$1.00	$5.00
Juvenile Print (Regular, Large Print, Paperback)*	2 weeks	2	$0.30	$3.00
Juvenile Audio, Music*	2 weeks	2	$0.30	$3.00
Juvenile Video (including sets)*	2 weeks	2	$0.30	$3.00
Juvenile Periodicals*	2 weeks	2	$0.30	$3.00
Juvenile Specialty Items (Kits, Games, Toys, Equipment, Video Games, and other special items)*	2 weeks	1	$1.00	$5.00
Museum Passes and other Local Passes	1 week	0	$1.00	$5.00
Some Libraries offer special Adult, YA, or Juvenile items which circulate for one week only**	1 week	0	$1.00	$5.00
Some Libraries offer special Adult, YA, or Juvenile items which circulate for 30 days**	30 days	1	$1.00	$5.00
Rental Items: Category 1 (offered by some Libraries only)**	1 week	0	$1.00	$5.00
Rental Items: Category 2 (offered by some Libraries only)**	1 week	0	$2.00	$20.00
**Note: In SPARK, fines are based on the patron type checking out the item rather than the item type. Juvenile accounts checking out items at the Lititz Public Library will be fine free.*				
*** Inquire at a Library for details.*				

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