

STOUGHTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

LIBRARY MATERIALS USE POLICY

Revised 08-20-25



I. Purpose

To assure the fairest possible use of library materials by all library users, the Library Board governs the loan periods, use practices, fee rates, and overdue notice production for library materials, including books, non-print materials, electronic resources and any other items that the library determines to be considered part of the library collection.

II. Definitions

- A. "Loan Period" is defined as length of time materials are borrowed and/or checked out.
- B. "Fees" are defined as money charged for lost or damaged materials.
- C. "Notices" are defined as information sent to users regarding library materials.
- D. "Blocks" are defined as notations in a user's record that refer to overdue, lost, miscellaneous charges, incorrect address, and other user record notations.
- E. "Valid Library Card" is defined as a library user registration that has current residence and contact information and does not contain unresolved blocks such as outstanding charges more than \$20.00.
- F. "Limited-Use Card" – A limited use card allows the holder to check out only three items at a time and place holds on only two items at a time. It's a way to allow high-risk library users to still use the library and limit the potential loss to the Library. Once charges have been paid, then the limited use card status will be changed to normal card status.
- G. "Lost Date" is the date overdue items automatically are changed to "Lost" status.
- H. "Fines" are defined as money charged for overdue Outerlibrary Loan Materials

III. Checkout Process

- A. Users may check out materials by presenting a valid library card or photo ID at the Circulation Desk or the self-checkout stations, or by typing in their library card and pin number at a self-checkout station, if their records do not contain blocks that prohibit them from so doing.
- B. Checkout privileges will be denied if a user's record contains unresolved blocks such as outstanding charges of more than \$20.00. Payment plans are available for Library users who owe more than \$20.00.
- C. Library staff have the discretion of limiting checkout privileges and quantities of materials for immediate family members of a library user who has excessive outstanding charges, or for persons living in the same residence as a library user who has excessive outstanding charges.

IV. Loan Periods

- A. The loan periods apply as outlined in Appendix A. At the staff's discretion, special loan periods may be applied to any material not on hold in order to accommodate vacations, hospital stays, book groups, and/or other special needs. Special loan periods should be used sparingly, and only with items without a holds queue and owned by the Stoughton Public Library.
- B. Check out is limited to 100 items at a time. In the case of items that are in great demand and short supply, such as some holiday books or homework related items, a temporary limit on the number of items that a library user may check out may have to be imposed at the discretion of the Library Director.
- C. Materials loaned to Stoughton Public Library for local borrowers fall under Stoughton Public Library loan periods and overdue policies; however, borrowers will be held responsible for any special assessments placed by owning libraries.

V. Fines, Fees, Reimbursements

- A. The Stoughton Public Library does not charge daily overdue fines for library items except as noted below in Section VII, Outerlibrary Loan.

The library assumes no responsibility for damage or alleged damage to personal equipment while used in conjunction with library materials.

B. Fees

- i. Items that are not returned or damaged beyond use or repair will be charged a lost/damaged fee or the replacement cost. Library users who pay for lost or damaged items will be charged a fee based on the cover price of the item when it was new. These fees cover the cost of staff time and processing materials. Replacement copies for lost or damaged items will only be accepted with prior management approval. Only new items will be accepted.
- ii. If it is discovered that the item was lost due to an error on the part of the Library rather than the user, the user's record will be cleared of any charges and appropriate refunds issued or credited to the user's record.
- iii. All fees for lost or damages items, regardless of value, remain on the user's record until resolved, and a block is placed on the user's record that may bar further checkout privileges. If users who owe the Library money file for bankruptcy, the Library will stop trying to collect any money owed, but those users are still responsible for payment of debts owed to the Library.

C. **Payments Without a Library Card**

Library users may pay fines and fees for others and for themselves without having a library card present. However, to protect patron confidentiality, no information other than the dollar amount will be given.

D. **Reimbursement for Lost Items Returned and Eligible for Refund**

Library users may return lost items for a partial reimbursement after fees have been paid. There will be no reimbursement for lost items after six months from the lost date. There will be no reimbursement for items with parts missing after four weeks from the due date. Lost item reimbursements will not be issued for charges of \$5.00 or less. Items owned by other libraries may or may not be reimbursed, according to the owning library's policy.

E. **The Library assumes no responsibility for damage or alleged damage to personal equipment while used in conjunction with library materials**

VI. Notices

A. **Hold Notices**

Notices are sent to notify library users that reserved materials have arrived for them and should be checked out within 7 calendar days. These notices may be sent through phone, text or email.

B. **Overdue Notices**

Notices are sent to remind library users to return overdue items; however, it is the Library user's responsibility to be aware of when items are due. These notices may be sent through email or regular mail notification.

i. The first overdue notice is sent after items are 14 days overdue.

ii. The second notice is sent after items are 28 days overdue. The second notice is a Notice of Unresolved Charges that informs the user that unless the item is returned, the user will be charged the replacement cost for the item.

VII. Outerlibrary Loan (OLL)

A. The purpose of Outerlibrary Loan (OLL) is to obtain materials not available through the South Central Library System (SCLS). The Stoughton Public Library provides this service in order to expand the range of materials available to our patrons. While the library will make every effort to fill requests, not all OLL requests can be filled. More information is available at www.scls.info/ill/basics/faq.html.

B. Materials published at least six months ago that are not available through SCLS may be requested via OLL through the Adult Services Department.

Materials requested via OLL are subject to borrowing and renewal restrictions, including loan periods, as dictated by the owning library. The Library reserves the right to restrict OLL borrowing privileges for patrons who repeatedly disregard loan periods or damage OLL items.

- C. Patrons who reside in one of the seven SCLS counties (Adams, Columbia, Dane, Green, Portage, Sauk, and Wood) and have a library card in good standing may place up to five OLL requests per day and up to fifty requests per year. Items requested via OLL at the Stoughton Public Library must be picked up at and returned to the Stoughton Public Library.
- D. Late returns can negatively impact the library's ability to obtain materials in the future. OLL items will be assessed a late charge of \$1.00 per day with a maximum charge of \$10.00.
- E. Renewals of OLL items must be requested at least one week before the due date. These requests are granted only at the discretion of the owning library. Patrons must wait at least eight weeks before requesting the same item via OLL.

VIII. Card Holder Responsibility

- A. As stated in the library card application, cardholders are responsible for material checked out with the library card issued in their name, including material checked out by others with or without the card holder's consent, unless the card holder has previously reported the loss of their card to the library.
- B. Until the Library is notified of a lost or stolen card, a library card is valid and its owner is responsible for all use of the card and for any lost or overdue materials and fees incurred. In the case of children, the parent or legal guardian who signed the library card application is the responsible party.
- C. Once the library has been notified that a card has been lost or stolen, that card will be invalidated and a block will be placed on further use; the card holder will not be responsible for further items checked out on that card.
- D. Limited-Use Cards – If more than one member of a household has outstanding charges equaling \$50 or more, the Library may make the valid cards of other members of the same household "limited use." When issuing library cards to juveniles, limited use cards will be issued if a juvenile's guardian has outstanding charges totaling \$20 or more.

Adopted: September 1996
 Amended: September 12, 2002
 Amended: October 9, 2003
 Amended: December 13, 2004
 Amended: March 8, 2006
 Amended: February 14, 2007
 Amended: September 10, 2008

Amended: October 20, 2010
 Revised: August 17, 2011
 Revised: February 19, 2014
 Revised: September 21, 2016
 Revised: March 21, 2018
 Amended: September 19, 2018
 Revised: November 21, 2018
 Revised: October 21, 2020
 Revised: September 21, 2022
 Revised: August 20, 2025

Appendix A: Loan Periods and Fine Schedule

I. Loan Periods

Material Type	Loan Period
Books	28 days
Books: New Fiction "New" status generally remains for a period of six months, during which time these items are housed on the "New Book Shelf."	14 days
Books: Lucky Day Collection	14 days
Children's holiday picture books	14 days
Music recordings	14 days
Audio books	28 days
DVDs	7 days
DVD series instructional nonfiction DVDs	28 days
Lucky Day DVDs	7 days
Reference Materials These materials must be used in the library.	None
Newspapers These materials must be used in the library.	None
Magazines	14 days
Electronic Resources	Varies according to service
Miscellaneous: toys, kits	14 days
Outer-Library Loan materials	Varies according to loaning library
Laptop Computer for use in Library	Up to 1 day

II. Fines

Material Type	Daily Fine
Outer-Library Loan materials	\$1.00

Appendix Adopted

March 8, 2006

Revised August 9, 2006

Revised September 10, 2008

Revised October 20, 2010

Revised August 17, 2011

Revised February 19, 2014

Revised September 21, 2016

Revised March 21, 2018

Revised October 21, 2020

Revised August 20, 2025