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Novanet libraries eliminate fines on overdue books

Effective immediately, libraries in the Novanet consortium will no longer charge late fees on most loaned items. This change will persist at all Novanet libraries after the COVID-19 pandemic has passed.*

“One of the core values of libraries is providing equal access to information. We recognize library fines pose an equity issue by creating a financial barrier to accessing information. Fines also contribute to student debt,” says Suzanne van den Hoogen, Novanet chair.

The majority of each Novanet library’s collection — regular, general loans — are the items that will no longer accrue overdue fines. High-demand items, such as materials on course reserve with brief loan periods and equipment such as laptops may continue to accrue overdue fines to ensure the punctual return of these items for the benefit of all users. Library users are encouraged to ask staff at the Novanet libraries they visit to learn more about which materials are fine free.

To encourage the timely return of materials, library users will still receive courtesy reminders if their books are past due. Materials that are not returned will be considered lost and replacement fees may be charged. Please consult your local library for specific policies.

“We’re making a philosophical shift from protecting the collections to sharing the collections,” says van den Hoogen. “We want our libraries to be welcoming spaces, and we understand that overdue fines can generate financial barriers for our patrons. We hope that by alleviating the stress of potentially accruing overdue fines, more people will be encouraged to borrow books from Novanet libraries.”

The Novanet consortium consists of the university and college libraries in Nova Scotia, as well as the library at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick. Novanet provides students, faculty, and staff of its member institutions with access to the collective resources of all its members through a shared integrated library system with over 7 million print and electronic resources. Community borrowers can also benefit from Novanet by getting a free Novanet borrower card.

**Due dates for any materials currently on loan have been extended to September 30. Some Novanet libraries are developing curbside services for the students, faculty, and staff at their respective institutions — please check with your Novanet library for more information. Community borrowers should check with their Novanet library for the most current information about services for community members.*

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