Fingal County Council

Press Release

3 January 2019

Fines removed from all Fingal libraries

From January 1, 2019, library members do not have to pay fines for overdue items and no existing fines will be collected.

Any library user who has overdue items can return them without having to pay overdue fines. Memberships can also be reactivated immediately and members will have full access to library services.

The removal of fines for library users is one of the actions included in the national strategy, “Our Public Libraries 2022 – Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities”. This strategy, launched in June 2018, aims to improve access to and increase use of the library as a community hub.

The five-year strategy is a joint initiative of the Department of Rural and Community Development, the County and City Management Association (CCMA) and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA).
Fingal’s County Librarian, Betty Boardman said: “Libraries are an invaluable resource for all in the community and we want to remove any barriers that might prevent people making full use of them. That is why we are eliminating fines and other charges. Libraries are welcoming spaces where all members of the community can access knowledge, ideas and information, and where people can reflect, connect and learn.”

“Research has shown that people view fines as a barrier to membership and usage of libraries. In addition, fines disproportionately affect those on lower incomes and can create a negative association with library use for children. There is evidence that library services which have removed fines see an increase in usage following their removal and we very much hope that will be reflected now in our Library Services.”

Ends

For further information, please contact press@fingal.ie

Photo caption: From January 1, library fines are abolished.

Notes to the Editor

- The removal of fines is a key aim of the new public library strategy Our Public Library 2022: inspiring, connecting and empowering communities which was published jointly by the Department of Rural and Community Development, the County and City Management Association and the Local Government Management Agency and launched by the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring T.D. in June 2018.

- There will be no overdue fines charged on any materials taken out from the library by library members from the 1st of January 2019.

- All fine charges on members’ accounts as of the 1st of January 2019 will be removed.

- The new policy to eliminate overdue fines takes effect on the 1st of January 2019; previously paid overdue fines will not be refunded.

- Fines cannot be cleared from an account until the overdue item is returned to the library as the library management system does not charge fines to the account until this time. Once an item is returned, the system automatically charges the fine and this can then be cleared.

- No fines does not mean no responsibility. Members will continue to receive reminders and overdue emails to prompt them to return items to the library and are asked to please return items on or before their due date to allow them to be borrowed by other library users.

- If a member does not either return an item or contact a library staff member to discuss an overdue item before they receive a third reminder, their card will be blocked from taking out or renewing any further items. Borrowing privileges cannot be restored until either the overdue item is returned, or the member has made contact with a library staff member to discuss the matter.
• Fees for lost or damaged adult items will be charged and these will be shown as a balance on a library account. There will be no replacement charge for children’s items which have been lost or damaged.