

April 24, 2025

St. Albert Public Library Eliminates Overdue Fines on all Children’s and Young Adult Materials

St. Albert, AB — St. Albert Public Library is thrilled to announce the removal of overdue fines on all children’s and young adult materials, effective immediately. All existing late fees on children’s and young adult materials have been forgiven, with the exception of lost materials.

By eliminating overdue fines on children’s and young adult materials, the St. Albert Public Library hopes to create a more welcoming environment for young readers and their families. This change aligns with the Library's commitment to fostering a love of reading and learning in the community.

"As stated in the Canadian Federation of Library Association (CFLA) CFLA Position Statement on Open Access to Information, 'Open access to information should be encouraged at all levels of government and in all publicly-funded institutions. This information should be available free of charge with as little restriction on re-use and modification as possible,'" says St. Albert Public Library CEO Peter Bailey. "We believe that removing overdue fines is a significant step towards ensuring that all children and young adults have free and unrestricted access to the information and resources they need to succeed."

This initiative aims to support the strategies and goals of SAPL’s [2023-2028 Strategic Plan](#), including Strategic Priority 1 - Creating Young Readers: Early Literacy. It also aligns with SAPL’s Barrier Free Services Plan, specifically addressing financial barriers (fees and fines).

“Some St. Albertans let their memberships lapse and don’t return to the Library because of the barriers and stigma around overdue fees,” says Lisa Old, St. Albert Public Library’s Collections and Member Services Manager. “Often times, it is the most underserved groups who experience these barriers and who could most benefit from Library services.”

Membership fees were dropped in 2017, also as part of the Barrier Free Services Plan. This initiative resulted in thousands more St. Albertans with active memberships, and increases to circulations stats, program attendance and visitors to the library.

“We anticipate seeing a similar trend after removing overdue fines,” says Old.

More than 15% of Alberta's public libraries have gone fine free, including some of our neighbours: Edmonton Public Library, Strathcona County library, Fort Saskatchewan Public Library, Stony Plain Public Library, Bibliothèque de Beaumont Library and Leduc Public Library.

"We are committed to making our library a place where everyone feels welcome and valued. Removing overdue fines on children's and young adult materials is an important step towards reducing barriers and promoting early literacy. We want to ensure that every child or young adult in our community has the opportunity to explore, learn, and grow through the resources we provide," said Bailey.

St. Albert Public Library remains dedicated to supporting the educational and informational needs of the community. Removing overdue fines on children's and young adult materials is the first step towards becoming completely fine free to ensure its services are more accessible and equitable for patrons.

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