

Port Colborne Public Library breaks down barriers by eliminating fines

Port Colborne, ON (Dec. 21, 2021) – The Port Colborne Public Library is now fine-free, joining hundreds of public libraries across North America in removing barriers to services. Fine-free libraries enjoy increased circulation, and more active and satisfied library users.

The library board has eliminated all fines on all overdue items for all patrons. Lost or damaged items will still incur a charge.

“The board made our first step in removing fines for children and on children’s materials two years ago in July 2019,” said Michael Cooper, library board chair. “Making the next step this year to become a totally fine-free library was an easy decision. Any lost revenue is made up in other areas. Removing barriers to service is the board’s top priority.”

Fines on overdue materials were originally implemented by public libraries as a motivator for users to return items on time. However, libraries have found that overdue fines actually prevent people from using the library and do not improve the return rate of materials.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the library suspended all fines to help the community during lockdowns and chose not to penalize anyone with late fees. Library staff noticed that even without the deterrent of fines, people continued to return materials even if they were late.

“Our patrons are very responsible and try to return their items on time. Unfortunately, there are times when they can’t and fines build up. Outstanding fines often affect the most vulnerable people in our community, including low-income residents and families with children. We want to ensure that library services are accessible to everyone at all times and that includes eliminating fines,” said Susan Therrien, director of library services. “The pandemic has shown how difficult accessing services can be. Whether our doors are open or we are helping people curbside, our mission is to make sure that people always have equitable access to the library. Overdue fines are now a thing of the past.”

For more information, call the Library at 905-834-6512 or email library@portcolborne.ca.

Effective Dec. 20, 2021, operating out of an abundance of caution, the library has returned to curbside service only for the pickup of books and other materials, take-and-make crafts, free print services and e-resources. Curbside hours are Monday – Saturday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. The library will close Dec. 23, 2021 at 4 p.m. for the holidays and re-open on Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022 at 10 a.m.

About Port Colborne Public Library

Proudly serving the beautiful City of Port Colborne to enrich, empower and educate. The library is dedicated to meeting the needs of its user communities with great books, services, programs and resources. The Port Colborne Public Library is a welcoming space for all.

City of Port Colborne

Located on the south coast of the scenic Niagara Region, Niagara's Port of Call has found the perfect balance – successful industrial and commercial sectors, comfortable and scenic residential areas, white sand beaches, unique culinary choices, the world class Sugarloaf Marina, fishing, golfing, trails, shopping districts along the historic Welland Canal and an energized festival and entertainment scene that includes live theatre – truly a community that adds to the overall Niagara Experience.

For more information, contact:

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