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Blount County Public Library Circulation of Library Materials Policy

Introduction

The **Blount County Public Library** has developed the following policy regarding the circulation of library materials in an effort to both maximize the use of BCPL and minimize the loss of materials. These policies take into consideration the finite number of items which must be shared, the responsibility BCPL has as steward of a publicly-owned resource, and the commitment BCPL has to provide free and equal access to library resources.

Use of a Library Card

BCPL requires the presentation of a valid Blount County Public Library card or valid driver's license to check out materials. While BCPL does not usually require additional identification, it is assumed that patrons will not use library cards other than their own solely to avoid paying fines or charges which have accrued. BCPL reserves the right to question anyone who presents a library card which is obviously not his/her own and can also refuse to check out materials on any one card solely to circumvent the paying of a fine or charge accrued on another card (for instance, a patron who presents a card for checkout on which there are excessive charges owed will not be allowed to check out using another card, perhaps belonging to a spouse, a child, or a friend).

Length of Check-Outs, Checkout Limits, and Overdue Fines

Generally, library materials are checked out for three weeks and can be renewed three (3) times ~~one time~~ unless a hold has been placed on the item by another patron. There are notable exceptions, however, of which patrons must be aware. There are limits placed on the number of items of a particular type which can be borrowed at any one time, and overdue fines are levied when items are kept out beyond the date due. Please see chart below:

Materials	Loan Limit	Family Limit	Loan Period	Overdue fines (per item, per day)
Books	15	45	3 weeks	\$.25
Audiobooks	4	12	3 weeks	\$.25
Music CDs	4	12	3 weeks	\$.25
Magazines	4	12	1 week	\$.25
Children's Kits	4	12	1 week	\$.25
Long DVDs	4	12	3 weeks	\$.25
DVDs	4	12	1 week	\$.25

Reference materials, genealogical materials, and current magazines cannot be checked out. To avoid fines, all library materials must be returned or renewed before closing time of the date due shown on the check-out slip. Materials may be brought inside BCPL during business hours or returned to the outside drive-up book drop located on the Cusick Street side of the building. BCPL is not responsible for resources stolen or damaged in the 24-hour book drop.

Families with more than three valid library cards are asked to restrict DVDs to twelve (12) at any one time and to refrain from shifting checkout from one family member's card to another's to keep videos even longer.

Renewals

Any materials, except those which have been placed on reserve by another patron, may be renewed (in person, by phone, via the BCPL app, or online) up to three times. When calling to renew, please have the library card number ready. To renew via the app or online, both the library card number and PIN are required. Please visit or call BCPL to obtain a PIN. Renewals on items which have been placed on reserve by another patron are not allowed. Renewals are also not allowed if the card being used has any charges/fines in excess of \$4.99.

Reserves

A reserve may be placed on any item in BCPL that is currently checked out or on items in the catalog that are on order.

To "place a reserve" on an item, patrons must use the online catalog, either in BCPL or by accessing BCPL's website. Patrons are notified by email or phone when the item is available. The item will be held at the circulation desk for three (3) days after notification is made. A \$0.25 fee will be assessed to the patron account for every reserved item that is not picked up. A maximum of 3 requests at a time (for a single patron) is permitted. Reserve requests can be taken over the phone.

This service is substantially different from "holding" a book for a patron. In that case, a patron has phoned to inquire whether or not BCPL has a certain title available and has then asked the staff to "hold" it (until closing time the following day) until the patron can get to BCPL to check it out.

BCPL does not maintain a waiting list for titles it has not yet received.

Lost or Damaged Materials

BCPL, while recognizing that circulating materials will experience normal wear and tear, requires all recipients of a library card to sign a Statement of Responsibility, agreeing to pay for lost or damaged materials, as well as fines accrued against materials checked out on their cards. The Statement of Responsibility will be required when a library card is issued.

Library patrons are expected to pay for materials which are lost or damaged to the extent that they can no longer circulate, regardless of the cause of damage or loss. Replacement cost is customarily charged, along with a processing fee. In the event the book is not damaged to the extent that it must be discarded, the Library Director may assess a damage charge, up to \$10.00, the average cost of rebinding a book.

Overdue Materials: Fines and Fees

BCPL depends on the integrity of its patrons to assure fair and equitable access to the materials it holds. Circulating materials are checked out to patrons for a finite period. Return of those materials is essential if another cardholder is to have fair and equitable access. For that reason, BCPL imposes fines on materials which become overdue.

A fine is charged per day per item for overdue materials.

Patrons are given a receipt upon checkout, listing items and their respective due dates. If patrons provide contact information, BCPL emails or texts reminder notices when items are due. Patrons can also check the status of their account online with their library card number and PIN. When items are more than 6 months overdue, they are considered lost and the overdue fines become processing fees and appear on the patron's account along with the cost of the material. Patrons are sent a warning letter allowing 10 days to return the items before the referral to the collection agency is made. If it becomes necessary to send an account for collection, a \$20 referral charge is also added to the patron's account.

Fines should be paid at the circulation desk upon return of the item. Accumulation of fines in excess of \$4.99 for materials already returned or not yet returned will result in the suspension of a patron's library privileges until such time the materials are returned and/or the amount owed is paid.

To avoid any fines at all, materials must be returned before closing time on the due date.

Returned Checks

All checks made out to BCPL will be deposited with the Blount County Trustee. Returned checks must therefore be picked up at the Blount County Trustee's Office located in the Blount County Courthouse, and a \$25.00 charge will be assessed.

Blount County does not discriminate based on race, color or national origin in federal or state sponsored programs, pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d).