

The Scarsdale Public Library Goes Fine Free

The Scarsdale Public Library is eliminating and forgiving all existing overdue fines, effective immediately. During the November meeting, the Scarsdale Public Library Board unanimously approved the new policy because fines can be a barrier to those seeking literary and community resources. By eliminating fines, the Board aims to further encourage the Scarsdale community to enjoy the library's extensive collections and visit its recently renovated building.

The American Library Association [recommends](#) the elimination of overdue fines to reduce economic barriers to borrowing library materials and increase library usage. Libraries across the country have already gone fine free, including the nation's largest library system, the [New York Public Library](#), as well several neighboring libraries in the Westchester Library System, including the White Plains Public Library, Greenburgh Public Library, and Eastchester Public Library.

"The collection of fines makes up less than 1% of the library's budget but can have a hugely negative impact on the use of the library's resources by all," stated Felicia Block, President of the Library Board of Trustees. *"The library can offset the loss of this income through other revenue streams, such as space rentals, allowing us to focus on our primary mission, to encourage and foster the lifelong joy of reading in Scarsdale. It is the right time to eliminate existing and future fines to best support that goal."*

"The recent renovation of the Scarsdale Library was not just about a new building. It was about creating a welcoming modern community institution that adapts with the times." Library Director Elizabeth Bermel stated. *"That includes eliminating outdated practices that can discourage access to the library for those who can't afford fines or are embarrassed to be deemed delinquent. All are welcome to enjoy the library!"*

The new policy will be in effect immediately and follows the practice established by Scarsdale and many community libraries during the pandemic, as many libraries were closed to the public and/or had limited hours from March 2020 through mid-2021. Patrons will continue to be responsible for lost or damaged materials.

The Scarsdale Public Library looks forward to welcoming Scarsdale residents and the Westchester community to enjoy its collections, programs and events without the stigma, inconvenience, or burden of late fines. For questions, please contact Elizabeth Bermel at ebermel@wlsmail.org.