

## Students Moving Between Schools

Students move between schools for a variety of reasons: their families move between districts, they graduate to the next level, or they leave the district entirely (and then sometimes return).

Because there are so many different situations and schools, we may not have covered every possibility comprehensively. If you have an effective process for handling a specific situation, please let Library Services know and we can work to include it in this list of suggested best practices.

Below is a list of common situations and suggested processes for handling them.

### Receiving books borrowed from another school

Sometimes, students will move between schools without returning their books first. In that case, you may receive a book that belongs to another school in the district. Follow these steps to return the book to its original location and clear the student's record:

- Accept the returned book that belongs to another school in the district, but do not check it in.
- Send the book through inter-school mail to the "owning" library.
- You may also wish to call or email the "owning" librarian to alert them that a book will be coming through inter-school mail.
- The "owning" school librarian receives the book in the mail and **checks it in immediately**.
- Then, the "owning" school librarian **must waive the fines for the patron who had the book checked out**. The "owning" school librarian should also waive any other overdue fines for the student that originated from their site.
- Because the process is a little complicated, school library staff should communicate with each other to make sure materials are received through the mail and accounts are properly cleared.

### When your patrons have materials and/or fines from other schools

The above situation describes what to do when students return books they originally borrowed from another school. You also need a process for when students *don't* return the books they owe another school. Here are some suggestions for dealing with overdue books owned by other libraries:

- Treat materials checked out from another school (and fines from other schools) like you treat other overdues (or fines) and include them in any reminders you send.
- Leave checked-out materials from other schools on the patron's record for two years. After two years, you may call or email the librarian at the school where the book was checked out and ask that the materials be marked "lost." The lost fine may then be waived, but only by the "owning" school.
- If you cannot contact the "owning" school, after two weeks you may contact Library Services for the book to be declared lost and the lost fine waived.

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For students who transfer to your school owing not a book, but a fine, here are some suggestions:

- After two years at the elementary level or three years at the secondary level, you may call the librarian at the school where the lost fine was charged and ask that payment of the lost fine be waived.
- If you cannot contact the “owning” school, after two weeks you may contact Library Services for the book to be declared lost and the lost fine waived.

### Collecting lost book fines for students who have moved schools

Although these processes must be adapted for each school (because they involve your principals, secretaries, and bookkeepers), here are some general guidelines that may work for you:

- If you have a student who owes money for lost materials owned by another school, accept payment from the student if at all possible.
- Place the money in the school's activity fund and get a receipt from the school secretary.
- Request that your school secretary send a check for the amount of the payment to the librarian at the school that owned the materials.
- The receiving librarian must give that check to the school secretary for deposit in their activity fund, **and immediately enter the payment of the fine into the patron’s library record.**

While the above process works for some schools, you may encounter objections from your principal, your secretary or bookkeeper, or yourself. If so, you can make it your regular practice to send students who owe fines back to the originating school to pay their fines.

This, too, has its complicating factors, and it does place greater burden on students and their families. However you choose to handle the collection of fines for students who have moved schools, communication between the current and former libraries can help matters go smoothly.

### Handling overdue fees for students who move schools

As demonstrated by the above processes, collecting fines from students who have moved between schools is not the simplest process. Therefore, you may wish to waive late fees for students who are leaving your school. Here are some suggestions:

- You can waive late fines for books that were eventually been returned, but keep fines for books that have not been returned on student accounts, even if they are leaving your school.
- If a student who has just transferred to your school has an overdue fine for books that have been returned, you may call or email the school library where the fine originated and ask that it be waived.
- If you cannot contact the school originating the overdue fine within two weeks, you may call or email Library Services and ask that it be waived.

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### A few notes on waiving fines

Whether a fine is for overdue return or loss/damage of checked out materials, there are some reasons to waive them, including:

- The student is indigent.
- The student has worked off the fine in the library.
- You have chosen to host a periodic amnesty program.

**You do not *have* to refuse circulation privileges to students with books checked out from other schools; in fact, in most cases you should not.**

There are several factors to consider: APS policy, state law, and of course your own judgment as professionals.

APS policy does state that you *may* impose a restriction to on-site use, if a student “abuses library-media center materials.” (<http://www.aps.edu/about-us/policies-and-procedural-directives/procedural-directives/j.-students/student-fees-fines-and-charges> )

We also need to consider state law – 22-15C-7, *Sale or loss or return of school library material*, which states that, “Where a parent or guardian is determined to be indigent according to guidelines established by the department, the school district shall bear the cost.”

Library Services recommends that you try to stay true to the policy, the state law, and our primary mission of encouraging students to develop a love of reading in the following ways:

- Encourage students to return or pay for lost materials, but also use your professional judgment to consider the individual circumstances of each student.
- Remember that Destiny is subject to human error: a book may show as being lost when it was actually returned.
- Consider the cost to the district in staff time of collecting lost book fees.
- When possible, deal with lost books and outstanding late fees before students leave your school (but remember that librarians don’t always get a chance to do this).

In our large and diverse district, there are many different situations. It’s important to look at the context before refusing circulation privileges to a student because of books checked out from other schools. In most situations, erring on the side of allowing the student to check out books is more in keeping with APS policy, state law, and our mission of encouraging reading.