

Madison Library

New fines and overdues rules

The Library Trustees, at their September 18 meeting, voted to change from charging fines for overdue items to accepting donations in lieu of fines (“conscience jar”) on a trial basis, from October 2013 through December 2013.

At the end of 2013, Trustees and staff will review how things are going and evaluate the following before deciding to continue with a “no fines” policy:

- number of overdue items
- income from donations vs. income from fines
- staff time spent following up on overdues
- feedback from library members

Madison Library’s new overdue notification procedure:

1. Madison Library does not charge fines for overdue library materials. Patrons returning overdue items are encouraged to donate to the “Conscience Jar” on the circulation desk.
2. When a book or other item is two weeks overdue, the patron receives an email or phone call reminding him or her to return it. If the overdue item is not returned within one additional week, the patron receives a second phone call or email. A message will be displayed on the patron’s account to alert staff that the patron has overdue items.
3. When a book or other item is four weeks overdue, a written notice is sent to the patron by mail, indicating the titles and prices of the overdue materials and stating “One or more of the above items are overdue by more than two weeks. Borrowing privileges are suspended until these items are returned.” This letter is signed by a staff member.
4. A second and final notice, with a copy of the NH statute pertinent to library materials, is mailed at six weeks.
5. If a patron does not respond to these four actions, his or her library privileges are revoked until the materials are returned, or payment made if they are lost. The Library Director may request that a police officer hand-deliver a written notice to the delinquent patron’s home as a last resort.