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Circulation Policy

The Madison County Public Libraries (“MCPL” or “the Library”) is a system of three library branches. MCPL is a member of the North Carolina Cardinal Consortium, serving patrons across the state of North Carolina. In accordance with NC Cardinal rules, the Library applies the same privileges, responsibilities, and fees to all MCPL cardholders (or “patrons”) and all NC Cardinal cardholders. As a member library, MCPL agrees to share all circulating books, music CDs, audiobooks, DVDs, Blu-rays and related audiovisual materials through resource sharing after the expiration of the 6-month age hold protection. Material types **not** listed above are not shared outside of Madison County or with a non-MCPL library card.

The Library maintains a Circulation Policy and applicable procedures to ensure that all patrons are provided with consistent and equitable services from Library staff members and that every patron has clear expectations of their rights as an MCPL cardholder.

1. Registration

Library cards are provided to full-time and part-time residents of Madison County or employees who work in Madison County free of charge. Registering for a library card may be done online from the library’s webpage, over the phone, or in person. Applicants must supply photo identification along with proof of residency and sign the library card. Parents/guardians may sign for juveniles if needed. Patrons must pay off any balance owed to any other NC Cardinal Libraries before Madison County Public Libraries will issue a card.

By signing the card, applicants certify that the information they provide is true and correct to the best of their knowledge and that they agree to obey all policies of the Madison County Public Libraries, as well as libraries within the NC Cardinal system. They are also accepting financial responsibility for their library materials.

Note: *Circulation rules apply where the material is circulated. If a patron appears physically at another NC Cardinal library and uses an MCPL card to check out material, the circulation policy of that library applies.*

A non-resident of Madison County is eligible for a library card, which expires each year and costs \$20 annually to renew. *The yearly fee is not charged if the patron is employed in Madison County.*

Cardholders are responsible for the safekeeping and use of their card, including all items and fines charged to their account unless the card has been reported lost or stolen. Lost cards should be reported to the Library immediately to avoid unnecessary charges and may be replaced for free. All reported lost cards will be marked inactive until replaced.

Cardholders are only allowed one Madison County Public Library card in their name with the exception of Student Accounts (see below). It is permissible for patrons to have multiple accounts at different libraries within the NC Cardinal Consortium. [Click [here](#) for steps regarding NC Cardinal’s multi-card Policy or select [here](#) for a visual flow chart.]

Upon application for a library card, the Library will verify that the applicant does not already have a card within the MCPL system. If the Library finds that an applicant has a pre-existing MCPL account, the applicant must update the information on the account, take care of any outstanding balance, and a new card will be issued. If any patron is found to have multiple MCPL accounts, any fees on the accounts should be paid as soon as possible. The Library will work with the patron to merge holds associated with the accounts into one account.

The Library Director will be the sole arbitrator in instances where a patron wishes to challenge the finding.

1.1 Online Library Card Registration

MCPL's online library card registration system enables all full and part-time residents of Madison County, as well as any person who attends school or pays property taxes in these counties, to obtain a library card via an online application at www.madisoncountylibrary.net. The Library requires that registrants provide proof of identity in-person before they are able to obtain the physical library card and borrow physical library materials.

1.2 Identification

Patrons must have one photo ID to register for a card.

Valid Forms of ID - Persons (age 16 and older) applying for a library card are required to present valid photo identification. The following items will be accepted by Library staff as valid forms of identification. This list is not limited; a photo ID is defined as an item containing a photo of the applicant, with first and last legal name of applicant.

- Valid Driver's License
- State Identification Card
- Student Identification Card
- Military Identification Card
- Social Service Card
- Passport

1.3 Patron Profile Groups

These are the NC Cardinal Patron Profile Groups utilized by the MCPL and their longevity.

- **Adult:** 3 years; 18+ years old
- **Adult Limited:** 6 months; 2 items can be checked out at a time.
- **Internet:** 1 year; for digital material only
- **Juvenile:** 3 years; 0-11 years old
- **Juvenile Limited:** 6 months; 2 items can be checked out at a time.
- **Teen:** 12 -17 years old
- **Teen Limited:** 6 months; 2 items can be checked out at a time.
- **School:** 1 year; no card (utilized student ID number) [see below]

1.3 Juvenile (ages 0 – 11) and Teen (ages 12-17) Registration

A parent or guardian with an MCPL card in good standing may obtain a library card for a child by providing a valid form of identification and signing the registration card. (“Good standing” is defined in the following way: has a history of checking out and bringing back physical material, does not have any issues or alerts/notes on the account that would cause concern for loaning material. Staff should look at “Last Activity” and “Notes” for any information to prove “good standing”.)

If a parent or guardian does not have or desire to have an MCPL card, the Library may issue a “Juvenile Limited” or “Teen Limited” card with a parent’s or guardian’s signature on the card as the responsible party. Upon signing, the parent/guardian assumes responsibility for all materials and any fines incurred through the use of the child’s card. The child must be present at the time of registration . Juvenile and Teen cards are connected to the account of the responsible adult in a “group”.

As Juvenile card holders reach the age of 12 (or 18 to become an Adult account), they will be moved to the next age group up. The Teen permission group provides access to some young adult digital resources. Parents can request for their child to be moved up to the Teen permission group to give them this access - or they can ask for them to be moved back to Juvenile to deny them this access.

At the age of 18, a teen may be “ungrouped” from the responsible adult. At that time, any fees owed accrued on the Teen account are assumed by and may be moved to the account of the responsible adult.

The Library Director, Assistant Director, Branch Manager, and/or Children's Programming Coordinator retain the right to modify the registration process for youth in situations where the above policy does not apply.

1.4 Student Access (School) Accounts

(Taken and adapted from NC Cardinal Knowledge Books)

Accounts for students will be added to the patron database by the Director or assigned staff. These new Student Access (School) accounts utilize the school student identification number as the patron barcode, are assigned to the School permission group, and **do not replace existing juvenile or teen library patron cards**. Student Access/School accounts should never be merged with another patron account. These accounts last for one year and will be updated by MCPL, the school system, and the State Library of North Carolina each year. In most cases, staff will not create School accounts.

If a Student Access patron requests a standard library card so that they may have access to materials they cannot circulate with their Student Access account (as noted below), staff should create a new, separate juvenile or teen library account using their standard barcode range and assign it to the appropriate patron permission group as they normally would for any other patron.

In short, when a library system is participating in the Student Access program, students within the system may now have two patron records, a standard (Juvenile or Teen) library account and the new Student Access account assigned to the permission group of School.

School accounts have restrictions within NC Cardinal:

- Student Access accounts will have the ability to place holds and borrow items from their local library system.
- Student Access accounts will not be able to place holds outside of their home system.
- Checkout limit is a maximum of 10 print and/or audiobooks.
- No overdue fines will be charged for Student Access accounts
- The patron/parents of Student Access accounts will be responsible for lost or damaged books fees.
- DVDs are not included in this project and will not be available for check out using Student Access accounts.
- All Student Access accounts will be identified by the permission group "School". This permission group includes both teacher and student records.

General Program Goals

- Access to statewide online library resources across the consortium
- Access to locally purchased online research databases and other e-materials, specifically e-books and e-audiobooks.
- Ability to check out books, both print and audio

Lost/Damaged Items

- Libraries will work with schools to track lost/damaged item fees.
- School accounts will be blocked based on library's current policies.

2. Borrowing Privileges & Responsibilities

Any cardholder, regardless of age, may borrow any circulating item in the Library's collection with a few exceptions. Material that is not shared through NC Cardinal Resource Sharing may only be checked out with Madison County library cards. For example, technology items, equipment, and games do not get shared via Resource Sharing with NC Cardinal; therefore, only a Madison County card will check out that material. Patrons are required to present their MCPL (or NC Cardinal library) card or photo ID when borrowing materials unless they are personally known by staff.

All cardholders have the right to request a receipt, printed by request, that lists the due dates for their items. Item due dates may also be accessed via the patron's email, online library account, or by calling the Library.

Borrowing privileges may be limited or rescinded if the cardholder has unpaid fines/fees or has violated the Library's Code of Conduct.

Loan periods and number of renewals are determined according to demand for the material, appropriateness of use, and value of the material. When borrowing material from another NC Cardinal library, the circulation rules and policies apply where the material is circulated. (For

example, if a patron with an MCPL card goes to a Buncombe County library and checks out material there, the patron must comply with the circulation policies of Buncombe County.)

2.1 Loan Periods

Material Type	Loan Period	Number of Renewals*
Audiobooks	3 weeks	2
Book Kits	3 weeks	2
Books	3 weeks	2
DVDs/Blu-Rays	1 week	2
*Technology/Equipment	2 weeks	0
*Games and Puzzles	2 weeks	0
Magazines	1 week	2
Music CDs	3 weeks	2

* Checks out on Madison County Library cards only.

An item may be renewed unless a hold has been placed on the item or the item's allotted number of renewals has been exhausted. Renewals are granted for the length of the item's loan period based on the calendar date on which the item is renewed. Technology/equipment items can only be renewed if they are physically returned to their branch.

2.2 Checkout Limits per account

Total Items	99
Music CDs	Unlimited
DVDs/Blu-Rays (New Releases)	5 per card/10 per group
Audiobooks	5 per card

2.3 Returning Items

Unless otherwise noted, all items owned by MCPL may be returned to any branch of MCPL, as well as at any NC Cardinal library.

Patrons that return out-of-system (non-Cardinal) items to the Library may be subject to the costs the owning library undertakes to retrieve the items.

Each Library maintains an outdoor book drop for our patrons' convenience that is accessible 24/7. Returns made while the Library is open are treated as being returned during that day. The book drop is not checked on Sundays or on holidays, but the Library adjusts for those holidays within parameters of the lending period.

2.4 Renewals

An item may be renewed unless a hold has been placed on the item or the item's allotted number of renewals has been exhausted. The Library's circulation software is configured to automatically renew borrowed items as noted above. Library accounts with valid email addresses will receive notifications regarding automatic renewals. Under special circumstances,

library staff may be able to renew items for longer than the usual term or set specified due dates.

Renewals are granted for the length of the item's loan period based on the calendar date on which the item is renewed, listed above.

2.5 Overdues

MCPL does not charge overdue/late fines; however, it should be noted that many other NC Cardinal libraries do institute overdue fines. This serves as a reminder to patrons that circulation rules apply based on the library where the material is circulated. It is, therefore, feasible for a MCPL patron to accrue overdue fines if their card is used at another library system to check out material.

2.6 Holds

Patrons of MCPL have access to the collections of all three branches of the MCPL, as well as over 200 libraries in the NC Cardinal Consortium. Patrons may request in person, by telephone, or online that materials from any branch of MCPL and any other NC Cardinal library be delivered to their library of choice. Patrons must verify their identity if placing the hold in person or t online.

If placing the hold by telephone, patrons may provide their card number. If the patron does not have the card number available, they may provide their name and one additional identifier matching the information on their account (i.e. address, phone number, email, date of birth).

Items will be held for 7 business days after the patron has been notified of the availability of the item. Although their holds will be fulfilled, patrons with an account balance greater than \$10.00 will be unable to borrow items. The Library reserves the right to cancel holds that are older than six months and have not been fulfilled.

3. Patron Accounts

3.1 Library Card Expiration and Account Updates

In order for the Library to maintain the accurate contact information of our patrons, MCPL and all NC Cardinal library cards are set to expire three years from the date of initial registration or the date of a card renewal. To renew the card in person, a patron must present their library card or photo ID; to renew over the phone, a patron must relay their library card number or other contact information unique to the user.

Library staff may extend the expiration date of a non-MCPL library card for no more than one week without renewing it IF the patron's contact information has not changed. A card from another NC Cardinal library cannot be renewed at a non-system library; patrons must contact the home library system in order to renew the card.

When renewing a library card, a patron will be asked to provide their current address, phone number, and email address. If the information provided differs from what is currently in the account, the patron's record will be updated.

Patrons may log into their online account to update the phone number, email address, and certain other account preferences associated with their library card, but may only update their mailing address via phone or in person. Patrons who have legally changed their names must provide proof of name change (updated photo ID, legal papers, marriage certificate, etc.).

The Library reserves the right to request that a patron complete a new registration form.

3.2 Authorized Users

Patrons are allowed to grant authorized users access to portions of their account information. Permissions include the ability to check out items on the account; place and pick up holds on the account; and view borrowing history. The Library also considers access to and payment of a patron's fines as authorized permissions. Authorized users can be added or removed at any time.

3.3 Online Account

All MCPL system cardholders have access to an online account. To sign in, users must have their library card number or username, and PIN or password of their choosing. Patrons can use their account to view checkouts and holds, place holds, renew items, change their contact information, and set preferences for their account and circulation history.

3.4 Resetting PIN/passwords

A PIN or password is needed to access a patron's MCPL online account and may be needed to access digital material. Patrons with an email address on file may reset the PIN/password themselves through the online account login page. Patrons may reset their PINs/passwords via the phone by providing their library card number or their name with one additional identifier matching the information on their account (i.e., address, phone number, email, date of birth).

3.5 Confidentiality of Patron Accounts

The Library complies with North Carolina General Statute §125-19 regarding confidentiality of library user records.

- (a) Disclosure. – A library shall not disclose any library record that identifies a person as having requested or obtained specific materials, information, or services, or as otherwise having used the library, except as provided for in subsection (b).
- (b) Exceptions. – Library records may be disclosed in the following instances:
 - (1) When necessary for the reasonable operation of the library;
 - (2) Upon written consent of the user; or

(3) Pursuant to subpoena, court order, or where otherwise required by law.
(1985, c. 486, s. 2.)

Library staff members will not discuss a patron's record of loans, holds, renewals, or fines with anyone other than the patron, their authorized users, or with other library staff members, except to the extent necessary for efficient and effective service to the public.

3.6 Patron Account Retention

In accordance with the Library's Records Removal and Retention Policy, MCPL library cards are marked inactive after a period of three years from the current expiration date of the card. All information associated with an account, including checkouts, holds, and fines will be retained for seven years after the card has been marked inactive. If an account has not been renewed after those seven years of being marked inactive, the record and all associated information will be expunged completely from the system.

3.7 Account Blocks and Barring

Patrons may find their online access is limited or blocked from digital material access if they have a unresolved balance of more than \$50 on their account. Account balances affect a patron's ability to borrow material from both physical and digital libraries. The Library Director may choose to block a patron in the Cardinal system, if necessary, at his/her discretion. This may include violations to the library code of conduct; however, staff should refrain from barring a patron's account, which results in barring the account throughout the NC Cardinal consortium. For more information on best practices regarding barring accounts, please go [here](#).

4. Overdue Items and Lost/Damaged Materials

4.1 Overdue Items

The MCPL does not charge overdue/late fines for materials checked out at one of its branches. A patron who keeps items past the due date will receive a series of notices reminding them that the item should be returned. If the items are not returned after 30 days beyond the final due date, the user will receive a bill for the replacement cost of the materials, plus a \$2 processing fee, and their ability to check out other materials may be blocked if the amount owed exceeds \$50.

If the item is returned in good condition for continued circulation, the user's ability to borrow materials will be restored. If the items cannot be found, the user can pay the bill for the items in total or in payments, and then their ability to borrow materials will be restored when the item is paid in full. The Library Director reserves the right to change a patron's status to Adult Limited if the patron repeatedly loses material.

4.2 Fees for Lost/Damaged Items

In most instances damaged items cannot be placed back into circulation; therefore, the item must be replaced. In some cases, however, the Library will work with the patron to determine the damage fees. The amount for damage will be determined by MCPL Director, Assistant Director, or Branch Manager, in consultation with Director.

Damaged Fees can include the full replacement cost of the item, plus a \$2 processing fee. If a DVD/Blu-ray case has been damaged, there is a \$2 minimum to replace it. The cost may be higher for larger cases. If an audiobook case has been damaged, there is a \$10 minimum to replace it. The cost may be higher for larger cases. The cost to replace a missing barcode is \$1 per barcode. The cost for a lost or damaged Launchpad case is \$16.00, and the cost for a lost or damaged Launchpad charger and cord is \$21.00.

4.3 Patron Account Fees

The library will make every effort to collect any outstanding amounts for lost or damaged books without the need to submit these names to the County for collection. However, after three to six months, any amount in excess of \$50, without a good faith effort to make regular payments on the account, will be submitted to the County for collection, and this amount will then be handled in accordance with the current collection policies of the Finance Office.

Once the account has been referred to the County Finance Office, the Director must be advised of any payments or attempts to resolve the account in order to ensure that this is communicated to the Finance Office in a timely way.

Patrons have the right to receive a copy of a receipt for all payments. Cardholders are responsible for requesting a copy of a receipt at the time of the transaction. Payments owed to other NC Cardinal libraries may be made at any MCPL branch, though we urge the patron to submit payment to the assessing library since money does not cross systems. Staff can assist patrons in ensuring payment goes to the appropriate party within the assessing library.

4.4 Contesting Fees

Patrons wishing to contest MCPL fees on their library accounts should contact the Branch Manager of the patron's home library. The ultimate discretion for the voiding fees falls to the Library Director upon consultation with the Branch Manager. Patrons contesting fees on the grounds of hospitalization, theft, or any other event outside of the control of the patron or the Library may be asked to provide documentation of the event, including but not limited to a copy of a police report, hospital bill, or doctor's note.

Fines for damaged or lost items owned by another NC Cardinal library must be contested at the owning library. MCPL can provide patrons with the name and contact information if needed.

4.5 Replacement Copies

In the case of loss or irreparable damage to MCPL materials, the cardholder will automatically be charged the original price of the item, plus a \$2 processing fee.

At the patron's request, the Branch Manager or designee may work with the patron to obtain a replacement copy of the item. Replacements must be the same format and in new condition. Replacement copies should not show any markings (for example, stamps from other library systems). The Library will not accept replacement copies of items that do not meet these requirements.

Patrons who lose or damage items originally owned by a NC Cardinal library other than MCPL must contact the owning Library to discuss any replacement or a payment that is different than the automatically charged fee. MCPL staff can provide patrons with contact information upon request.

4.6 Claimed Returns

When a cardholder notices an item still on their account that they believe has been returned, he/she should contact a Library staff member. The Library will look for the item on their shelves. If the item is located, it will be removed from the record upon check-in and any fees associated with it will be voided. If the item is not located within the library system, discretion for whether a fee should be voided or upheld falls to the owning library.

In the case where the MCPL owns the item, discretion falls to the Branch Manager or to the Library Director. The item will be marked "Claims Returned" on the patron's account, where it will still be listed but not accrue lost fees or hinder the patron in any way. Repeated instances of Claimed Returns may result in a change in account privileges at the discretion of the Director.

4.7 Refunds

The Library issues refunds for lost items if the item is found and returned 30 days after the payment. Proper paperwork must accompany the returned item for the refund to be issued. After 30 days, these items are considered the property of the patron.

5. Fees for Additional Library Services

Each library branch provides a variety of services in addition to circulation. Many of these services are recorded within the circulation system, such as computer use. A schedule of fees for these ancillary services are listed below for reference.

DVD/video rental:	\$0.25 per DVD or 5 DVDs for \$1
Copies/Prints:	
Black/white and Color	\$0.25/page

*A "bulk rate" may be applied for copy jobs over 20 pages.

Fax/Scan Services:	\$0.25 per page
Digital Use Cards	\$1.00

6. Policy Amendments

This policy may be amended by the Library Board of Trustees at any time. The Library reserves the right to suspend or modify the limits noted in this policy in advance of a vote by the Board of Trustees to account for responses to emergencies or system-wide policy or technical changes outside of our control. Such modifications will be communicated to patrons via our website and social media.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees: March 16, 2021
Procedural Updates: October 15, 2024