

Town of Clayton Policy & Procedure Statement

	
Policy Number	LIBRARY 2024-01A
Department	Library
Subject	HEML Circulation Policy
Approved By	Town Council
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Purpose of Policy

The Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library (“Library”) Circulation Policy details library card registration, reserving and lending of materials, and overdue, lost, and damaged item procedures. This policy supports the Library’s mission to be a welcoming space for building community and connecting people to ideas and resources.

Confidentiality of Library User Records

The Library will abide by the North Carolina General Statute on Confidentiality of Library User Records (§ 125-19), which states—

(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.

Library Cards

All persons who reside on property within Johnston County are entitled to a Library card at no cost. Valid proof of identity and residence are required to obtain a library card. Proof of residence can be shown with photo identification, such as a driver’s license with current address listed or a combination of photo identification and a rental lease, utility bill, or comparable bill in the patron’s name. Library cards are valid for 3 years from the date of issue, with the exception of some temporary living situations when shorter expiration dates may be issued.

- Children under the age of five may borrow items on their parent/guardian’s card. Children from the age of 5-17 can be issued their own library card with parent/guardian consent as long as the parent/guardian has a library card and the child is present at the time of registration. A parent or legal guardian is responsible for the use of library materials by children under the age of 18.
- Homebound patrons may choose a friend or family member to pick up and return library materials on their behalf.
- Library cards expire to ensure staff have a patron’s correct contact information. To renew Library cards, patrons must prove their identity and residency within Johnston County in the same way as for the original card application. All fines and fees must be paid before a card can be renewed.

Other Library Card Options

Digital Access Card

Residents of Johnston County may apply for a temporary digital access library card. These library cards provide borrowing privileges to digital resources only and are valid for 6 months.

Non-Resident

Persons who do not pay Johnston County taxes may purchase a non-resident borrower's card according to guidelines found in Chapter 153A Article 14 (Libraries) of North Carolina General Statutes. Non-resident cards are available for three, six, or twelve months. The fee structure for this card is set each year by the Town of Clayton Town Council.

Town Employees

Library cards are issued as a courtesy to all Town of Clayton employees regardless of county residency. A Town Employee card is valid for the duration of employment with the Town of Clayton.

NC Cardinal

The Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library is a member of the NC Cardinal consortium. A library card issued by the Library is also valid at any NC Cardinal library. Be aware that materials borrowed from other libraries may be subject to owning library policies.

Account Security

To conduct circulation transactions or to receive information about a cardholder's circulation records, patrons must present a valid library card. Patrons conducting business by phone must provide the library card barcode number. Discretionary exceptions to this policy may be made for the occasional forgotten library card if the patron offers valid identification. Minors without official ID will be asked to confirm their address and birthday if they need to check items out without a card.

If a library card is lost or stolen, the cardholder is responsible for notifying the library as soon as possible. Unless a card has been declared lost or stolen, the library assumes that any person presenting the card has the permission of the cardholder to access the account.

Replacement cards may be issued for \$5.

Circulation Loan Periods

- Books and other materials (including audiobooks, kits, games, and technology): 21 days
- New adult fiction and all video: 7 days
- Periodicals, reference, and special collections items are available for in-house use only.
- Overdrive eBooks and eAudiobooks: 7 or 14 days
- Kanopy video streaming: 48 or 72 hours

The Library may establish additional loan periods or restrictions for special collections, materials in high demand, or for other items as needed.

Patrons should refer to their online account or checkout slip to find the correct due date for each item.

Renewal of Library Materials

Materials may be renewed twice if there is not a waiting list for the title. Technology materials are not renewable.

Material Loan Limits

Patrons may check out up to 50 items on their library cards. Downloadable items do not count towards your maximum limit. Limitations have been set for the following:

- New Adult Fiction, Easy Holiday, and Video – 5
- New Large Print, Audiobook, and Nonfiction – 10
- Battle of the Books – 3
- Audiobook – 20
- Technology – 1
- Kits and Games – 2
- OverDrive – 5 (4 for e-iNC)
- Kanopy – monthly credits displayed on platform

Note: Patrons cannot check out technology or backpack kits on Juvenile library cards.

Patrons may place up to 25 items on hold at a time.

Overdue Notices

Overdue notices are emailed as a courtesy. Patrons are responsible for the timely return of materials whether or not they receive overdue notices. It is the responsibility of the patron to notify the Library if they do not receive courtesy reminders and to update contact information as it changes.

Courtesy Notification

Patrons will receive an email or text message two (2) days before an item is due back to the library.

Overdue Notices

The first overdue notice will be sent to the patron's email address on record when the item is two (2) days overdue. If the item is not returned, one further overdue notice will be sent at fifteen (15) days overdue. Notices will include a list of overdue materials.

Bill for Replacement

A bill for replacement will be sent when the item is twenty-eight (28) days overdue. This notice will include a bill for the replacement cost of the item(s), including an individual item processing fee per item.

Fines and Fees

Materials kept out beyond the loan periods will be considered overdue, and fine or replacement fees will be assessed. Having overdue materials, fines, or fees on library cards may cause borrowing or service restrictions. Library patrons or the parent/guardian of juvenile library patrons are expected to return library materials promptly and to pay any fines incurred. Fines and fees will be transferred to responsible adult accounts when minors turn 18 years of age.

Overdue Items

Fees for overdue library materials will be as listed in the Town of Clayton Comprehensive List of Fees and Charges.

- Technology: \$5 per day overdue, up to \$25 total per item.

Technology Items Returned in the Book Drop

Technology items (including hotspots, Chromebooks, and Launchpads) can be damaged if returned in the afterhours outdoor book drop and must be returned inside the library building.

- Patrons returning technology items in the afterhours book drop will be charged a \$10.00 fee, plus the cost of any damages to the device.

If items are returned a second time to the book drop, device checkout privileges will be lost.

Lost and Damaged Items

Fees for items that are long overdue, lost, or damaged will equal the list/retail price of the item as well as the processing cost. Material replacements are not accepted in lieu of fees.

Lost fees are removed from the patron's account upon return or recovery of the materials in question.

- According to North Carolina statute Chapter 14-398 it is considered theft to borrow but not return library materials.

Claims Returned

Patrons who claim to have returned an item which still shows as checked out on their account, or who claim never to have checked out items that show on their account, may be granted a claims returned. Each instance will be noted in the patron's account. Items will remain on the account, without accruing fines, until the issue is resolved.

After five (5) instances, the library will assume that there is a possibility of false reports of claims returned. The most recent claims returned items will be considered overdue on the patron's account. The patron will be expected to return the items or reimburse the library for the lost materials according to the fee schedule listed.

Fine/fee Collection

Library patrons or the parents of juvenile library patrons are expected to return library materials promptly and to pay any fines incurred.

If a patron's account totals more than \$25 in fees, borrowing privileges are suspended unless:

- The patron is paying through an approved installment plan. Information on this plan will be entered into the patron record. It will be removed upon final payment.
- There are exceptions noted on the patron's record.

Any account that accrues an excess of \$50 in fees will be subject to collection through the North Carolina Debt Setoff Program.

- As authorized by the North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 105A, the Setoff Debt Collection Act (the "Act"), the Town of Clayton will submit debt to the North Carolina Department of Revenue for collection by applying the debt against any income tax refund more than \$50 that you may be entitled to receive or from lottery proceeds.

Refunds

The library does not issue refunds for fine/fee payments, including those for lost items.

Waiving Fees

Fees may not be waived except in the most extraordinary circumstances. Waivers or reductions of fees may be made on a limited basis at the discretion of the Library Director or their designee in the event of extenuating circumstances, which may include:

- Criminal Act
- Natural Disaster
- Medical Emergency
- Financial Hardship
- Reported Loss or Theft of Library Card
- Library Error

Patrons who have had large amounts of fees waived or reduced may be denied further service.