



NEWS RELEASE

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The Huntsville-Madison County Public Library is Going Fine Free

HUNTSVILLE, AL — The Huntsville-Madison County Public Library (HMCPL) announced today that it is eliminating fines charged for overdue items. The library will go fine free effective immediately. The Board of Directors voted unanimously on the measure at its May meeting.

The move is motivated in part by the Alabama Literacy Act, a plan to improve reading proficiency of public school students from kindergarten to third grade.

“We are proud to join the hundreds of libraries nationwide who are ensuring open access to library materials by going fine free,” said Cindy Hewitt, Executive Director of HMCPL. “It is important that the children in our community are able to access books without the threat of overdue fines so they have an opportunity to increase their literacy levels.”

HMCPL will be the first large library system in Alabama to go fine free. The decision is a result of research gathered within HMCPL’s system and analysis by other library systems that have already gone fine free.

The elimination of fines will not have a heavy impact on the library’s revenue as overdue fines make up less than 1% of HMCPL’s income.

HMCPL anticipates more members of the community will be able to use the library without the concern of paying overdue fines. There are currently over 22,000 accounts that are blocked due to fines.

With summer reading around the corner, the Library hopes to see an increase in library usage amongst students to limit the summer slide- a loss of reading skills that typically happens during the school break.

“The public library is an essential community asset tasked with meeting the information needs of all persons in the community,” said Hewitt. “By becoming a fine-free library, HMCPL will welcome back customers, gain new customers, as well as realign staff time towards meeting this mission moving forward.”

HMCPL customers will still receive overdue notices and will be charged for lost items. For more information on fine free, visit hmcpl.org/finefree

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