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*TO: All Media*  
*FROM: Kennebunk Free Library*  
*CONTACT: Michelle Conners, Director*  
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*DATE: May 17, 2021*

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*RE: Kennebunk Free Library is now Fine Free*

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### **Kennebunk Free Library Will No Longer Collect Overdue Fines**

Most can agree that a public library belongs to the community it serves and that everyone deserves equal access to it. In our years of experience working with this community, KFL staff has seen over and over again how library fines work against the goal of equal access.

All of our patrons accrue fines at the same rates –occasional overdue library items are a universal experience. The difference is the effect of those fines. Many patrons can hand over \$5 or \$10 without thinking twice about it and resume borrowing. Some have to wait weeks for another paycheck before paying their fines. Others give up on using the library altogether because they simply cannot afford the fines. That library fines are equal for everyone does not mean that they are fair or equitable.

The American Library Association and other professional organizations are urging as many libraries as possible to go fine free. Recognizing that fines have the effect of barring access to our most vulnerable populations, many libraries around Maine and around the country have followed that advice. KFL staff unanimously believes that it is time for us to do the same. Eliminating fines will truly enable everyone in our communities to discover, learn, and connect.

In light of this, Kennebunk Free Library voted on a change to our Lending Policy permanently removing fines for overdue materials. This means that KFL will no longer charge a daily fine for overdue materials. Patrons will still be responsible for bringing materials back on time and will be charged the replacement cost for any lost or damaged materials or for materials that are 20 days overdue.

While we were fine free during the pandemic we had an opportunity to test-drive the format and found the majority of patrons still returned their materials on time without the threat of fines. This experience along with increasing evidence (we have added resources to our website that go further into detail about going fine free) surrounding the fine free movement leaves us confident that library access and access to our materials will increase.

Overall fines accounted for less than 1% of our revenue and of this amount more than half went toward resources and staff time collecting those fines.

The Kennebunk Free Library is located at 112 Main Street in Kennebunk, Maine. For more information please call 207-985-2173. [www.kennebunklibrary.org](http://www.kennebunklibrary.org)