

CIRCULATION POLICY

Policy Statement

The circulation policy of the Lower Merion Library System informs library users of the terms and conditions under which materials are loaned in LMLS libraries. Library service and borrowing privileges for cardholders in good standing will be available without discrimination to individuals of every race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, national origin, handicap or disability, use of guide or support animals because of the blindness, deafness, or physical handicap of the user, or because the user is a handler or trainer of support or guide animals.

The Library Code Act of June 14, 1961, P.L. 324, as amended through June 2020, S 9371, states that every library, established and/or maintained under the provisions of this act, shall be free to the use of all the residents and taxpayers of the municipality, subject to such reasonable rules and regulations as the board of library directors may adopt, and the board may exclude from the use of the library any such person who willfully violates such rules. The board may extend the privileges of such library to persons residing outside the limits of such municipality upon such terms and conditions as the board may prescribe.

1. Registration

Upon registration, all residents and/or non-residents must sign a Lower Merion Library System responsibilities consent form. Children under the age of 18 must have the signature of a parent or guardian on this form. A copy of the LMLS Privacy Policy will be offered with the new or updated registration.

The person whose name appears on a library card is responsible for all materials checked out on that card. Adults who sign the registration form for juveniles are responsible for materials checked out on the juvenile's card. If a library card is lost or stolen, that fact must be reported to the library so that the lost or stolen card may be invalidated. All items checked out prior to the date the card is reported lost or stolen are still the responsibility of the library user. LMLS deems library users who allow third persons to use their library cards or library account information to have consented to the access of their private and confidential library use records by the recipients of their cards or account information.

a. Residents

All Lower Merion residents are entitled to borrowing privileges at the six Township libraries. There is no minimum age to obtain a borrower's card. Residents under the age of 18 will be issued a card with a juvenile status after receiving his/her parent or guardian's consent.

Patrons must complete a patron registration form after supplying identification that provides a current and permanent address within the Township. Photo identification is preferable. Acceptable forms of ID are:

- Deed or Lease
- Current Utility bill with Property Address
- Driver's License/Registration
- Pennsylvania Identification Card
- Voter Registration Card
- Current Checking Account Statement with Property Address
- School ID (K-12)
- Passport plus identification showing address in Lower Merion

College students are considered Lower Merion residents as long as they live on the campus of a Lower Merion college or university, or if they live off campus within Lower Merion Township. College students must show a piece of canceled mail addressed to them at their Lower Merion address or college dorm in addition to their photo ID if that ID shows a different home address.

Au Pairs or foreign exchange students may register for a card if they have a photo ID and a piece of canceled mail addressed to them at their Lower Merion host family residence.

Temporary residents, those residing in Lower Merion Township for a period less than 6 months, are not issued library cards. However, they will be eligible for guest passes to use the library system's computers.

b. Non-Residents

The Lower Merion Library System is a member of the Montgomery County Library and Information Network Consortium (MCLINC). If a non-resident of Lower Merion Township who is covered by a MCLINC library wishes to register with Lower Merion instead of at their home library, a temporary MCLINC card can be issued which is valid for 60 days. The patron's permanent library card will then be issued from their home library.

For other non-residents of Lower Merion Township who reside in Pennsylvania, the Access Pennsylvania Program, also known as the Statewide Library Card Program, entitles them to borrowing privileges at participating public libraries. The Lower Merion Library System is a fully participating member of the Access Pennsylvania Program.

Non-residents must have a current and valid library card from their home library with the blue Access Pennsylvania sticker on it before they can register at a Lower Merion library. The registration procedure is then the same as above, except that they will not receive a Lower Merion library card.

Non-residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania may receive a card upon the presentation of valid identification and the payment of an \$80 annual fee. You are exempt from paying the non-resident fee if you are:

- A person who owns residential or business property in Lower Merion

- A student attending a public/private Lower Merion school (K-12)
- A teacher in any public/private Lower Merion school (K-12)

These patrons may receive a card *without* a PA Access sticker for a period of one year or to the end of the academic year for teachers and students.

c. Online Library Card Registration for Residents

Lower Merion residents have the option to register for a library card online through www.lmls.org. Residents will fill out an online form with their address, contact information, and other pertinent information, which will be forwarded to the appropriate LMLS library. Upon receipt and processing of the application, library staff will contact the applicant with their library card barcode and password/pin. Online registration could take up to three or four days.

Lower Merion residents may opt to pick up their library card at their designated home library at the circulation desk with appropriate identification or have their library card mailed.

Library cards issued from online applications will expire in two months. It is the responsibility of the patron to confirm their address and contact information at the library in person within two months of receiving their card.

d. Associations

Library users can associate or link their library cards with other family members as a way to share account information. Parents may link their children without the child's signature. The library cards of all associating parties are required at time of sign-up.

All parties must be present when applying for Adult associations. Adults choosing to link library cards have consented to the access of their private and confidential library use records with all parties linked. (See: LMLS Privacy and Confidentiality Policy)

Linking library accounts allows you to:

- Check the status of linked accounts
- Pick up reserve books
- Pay fines
- Check out items on linked cards
- Carry one card

If at any time a patron wishes to dissolve an association, they must fill out a "LMLS Request to Dissolve an Association" form. After the dissolution, the library will keep the paperwork on file.

2. Expiration of Cards

Library cards expire after a period of three years. Upon expiration of a patron's library card, Polaris issues a block at checkout for staff to update the patron's record. MCLINC patrons with an email address in their library accounts will receive an email warning that their card is about to expire.

Updating a library card must be done in person with proper identification. Outstanding overdue materials or fines over \$30.00 on the account must be settled before reactivating the card.

3. Passwords/PIN Numbers

Library users may access their library record or account in the library at the online public access catalog computer terminals throughout the library, online from home, or through cell phones or personal devices. Two pieces of information are required:

- The "user id" which is the barcode number on the library card
- A password or pin number

Library users may review what materials they have checked out, renew the items if they choose, and/or they may place a hold/ reserve on materials.

The library user must choose a 4-to-10-character password/pin number in person at the circulation desk. The staff member inputs the password/pin number on their record. The library user may request to personally input this pin/password at the circulation desk. Library users can change the password/pin number in person with their library card at the circulation or reference desk or they can change it online from their account.

4. Loan Period

Library users are required to bring their library card or proper identification in order to have borrowing privileges.

a. Regular Loan Periods

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| • New DVDs | 1 week |
| • Older DVDs | 3 weeks |
| • All magazines | 1 week |
| • All other Lower Merion books and materials | 3 weeks |
| • ILL material and MCLINC titles | Loan period will vary |
| • Museum Passes | 3 days |
| • Hot Spots | 3 weeks |
| • Cake pans | 1 week |
| • Games | 3 weeks |

Library materials are never due on a day on which the library is closed, but will be due on the next library business day. These loan periods apply to Lower Merion items only. Interlibrary loan (ILL) material will follow that library's loan period policies.

Patrons are responsible for returning all items charged to their account on time. As a courtesy, the library system generally sends out a reminder when items become overdue. MCLINC patrons with an email address or cell phone information in their account will also receive a courtesy reminder notice via email and/or text when their items are coming due if the necessary information is provided by the patron.

b. Museum Passes

The Lower Merion Library Systems offers Museum Passes for check out.

- Museum passes may be checked out on an adult card in good standing.
- Museum passes check out for three days.
- Patrons may only borrow one museum pass per household.
- Museum passes are not holdable. Passes are available on a first come first served basis.
- Borrowed museum passes must be returned to the library from which they were borrowed and handed to a staff member for return.
- Museum passes returned in a library book drop will be assessed a \$10 fine.

c. Hot Spots

The Lower Merion Library System offers Hotspots for check out.

- Patrons must be 18 years of age or older and acknowledge this policy via their signature when checking out the device.
- Patrons must be in good standing with the library and not owe any fees on the account.
- A mobile Wi-Fi hotspot must be checked out from and returned to the library from which it was borrowed.
- Mobile Wi-Fi hotspots may be checked out for up to 3 weeks **with no renewals**. Only one hotspot at a time may be checked out to the same household. There is a 24-hour wait time before checking out another hotspot.
- Overdue hotspots will be **deactivated**. Patron's account will be charged an overdue fine of \$10/day with a maximum overdue fine of \$60.
- The Mobile Wi-Fi hotspot can provide Wi-Fi internet access for up to 10 devices within the cell network coverage area (no roaming).
- The library is not responsible for information accessed using this device or for personal information shared over the internet.

NOTE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS: Internet content filtering IS provided through the hotspot. However, parents/guardians are still responsible for monitoring what their children access via the hotspot because no filter is 100% effective. Hotspot users must agree to the LMLS Internet Use Policy and are encouraged to follow safe internet practices. The following behaviors can result in the suspension of hotspot privileges and/or criminal prosecution:

- Viewing, displaying, or disseminating materials that are judged in accordance with current legal definitions as being obscene.
- Use of the internet in any way that violates federal, state, or municipal laws.

d. Renewals

- All Lower Merion items, except interlibrary loan materials, may be renewed twice if a reserve/hold has not been put on that item.
- Renewals can be done at any MCLINC member library circulation desk, by telephone, or through the online catalog.
- The library card barcode is necessary for any renewal. Renewing an overdue item does not absolve the library user of paying overdue fees.
- LMLS materials are automatically renewed 3 days before the due date if there are no holds on the material, up to two additional loan periods. Automatic renewal does not apply to digital items.

5. Returns

Library materials may be returned to any LMLS branch or MCLINC library, with the exception of interlibrary loans, museum passes, and hot spots, which must be returned to the lending library.

Book drops and Audiovisual drops are available for returning materials after hours or on days the library is closed. The library will give fine-free days for MCLINC items to compensate for the hours closed. Materials returned from any non-MCLINC library cannot be checked in and late fines may be assessed by the loaning library.

6. Library Fines

To promote the return of material and optimal sharing of the library collection, the Lower Merion Library System charges fines and fees for overdue, lost, and/or damaged library materials. Library users are responsible for returning or renewing items by the due date.

Overdue fines are as follows:

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| • Adult books and materials | 30 cents/day/item | maximum fine \$10.00 |
| • Juvenile books and materials | 20 cents/day/item | maximum fine \$5.00 |

No fines are charged when the libraries are closed.

Borrowing privileges will be suspended when a patron's account reaches thirty dollars in fines or replacement costs. Borrowing privileges will be reinstated upon payment of the full amount. The status of an individual's library card will be used only in regard to circulation of materials at the library and does not affect the person's use of other services at the library.

If any material is lost or damaged beyond repair, the library user will be charged the replacement cost of the material at list price. If a library user locates a lost item within a month after payment, and there is a record of that payment, a refund will be issued. The overdue fines will be charged.

PENNSYLVANIA CONSOLIDATED STATUTES – TITLE 18

Sec. 6708. Retention of library property after notice to return.

- (a) Offense defined. – A person is guilty of a summary offense if he retains, any book, pamphlet, magazine, newspaper, manuscript, map or other property belonging in, or to, or on deposit with, any library open to the public or any part thereof, for a period exceeding 30 days after such library has given written notice to return the same.
- (b) Disposition of fine. – Any fine imposed under this section shall be paid over by the magistrate imposing such fine to the library instituting the prosecution, and the costs of prosecution.
- (c) Form of notice. – Such notice may be given by personal service upon the borrower, or by the mailing of a registered or certified letter to the address of the borrower on file with said library. The notice shall recite this section, and shall contain a demand that the property be returned.

1972, Dec. 6, P.L. No. 334, effective June 6, 1973.

7. Reserves

Reserves may be placed on all MCLINC items eligible for “holds.” Other local restrictions may also apply.

- A library user may reserve items in person at the library, by phone, or electronically from our public catalog computers, from a home computer or personal device.
- The barcode number from the library user’s card is mandatory for placing a reserve.

As soon as a reserved item becomes available, the library will notify the requesting cardholder. Reserved items will be held for three business days following notification. Any reserved items not picked up within this period will be given to the next requesting cardholder or, lacking further reserves, put back on the shelf. Library users may choose to be notified of reserves by e-mail, phone, or by text if phone carrier information has been provided by the patron.

Patrons placing reserves from home on items that are listed as available should wait until they are notified or until the status of their hold changes from ‘active’ to ‘held’ when they access their hold requests online.

The library card used for placing holds must be the card used for hold pick-up unless cards are associated.

If a staff member needs to telephone a patron about a held reserve, only the person for whom the reserve is held will be told the title of that item.

8. Confidentiality

Telephone requests for information about materials checked out to patrons (adult or child) will be responded to only if the caller has the barcode number on the library card.

Associations or linked library cards are permitted in the Lower Merion Library System. However, linking library records waives your privacy rights under PA 24 PS Section 4428 among the linked parties.

The library user has a right to know that all borrowing information will be kept confidential. The Lower Merion Library System will act in accordance with state laws to protect library user confidentiality.

Pennsylvania State Law mandates that:

“Records related to the circulation of the library materials which contain the names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of the state Library or any local library which is established or maintained under any law of the Commonwealth or the library of a university, college or educational institution chartered by the Commonwealth or the library of any public school or branch reading room, deposit station or agency operated in connection therewith, shall be confidential and shall not be made available to anyone except by court order in a criminal proceeding.”

(Section 4428. Library Circulation Records.)

Policy Effective January 1, 2012 (voted by LMLS Board October 4, 2011)

Updates to loan periods - June 13, 2014

Updates to DVD circulation - 2019

Updates to fine block and card expiration - 2021

Updates to reflect automatic renewals and no fees for reserves – May 2, 2023