



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, July 6, 2022

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No More Overdue Charges for Children and Teen Library Print Materials *Removing barriers and increasing access to reading and literacy for youth*

STOCKTON, Calif. – Effective July 1, 2022, the Stockton-San Joaquin County Public Library will no longer charge overdue fines on print materials checked out from the children’s and teen’s sections – no matter the age of the person checking out the materials.

“Every child or teen should have access to library materials without late charges,” shared Deputy Director and City Librarian Jenni Fontanilla. “This small change will make a big difference and allow children, youth, and families to enjoy the boundaries of reading and learning, without the concern of ultimately paying fines. It is such a great way to kick-off the summer – worry free, fine free reading.”

In 2019 the American Library Association passed a resolution citing mounting evidence that eliminating fines increases library card sign ups and library use. This resolution also recognized fines as a form of “social inequity” and urged libraries to actively “move toward eliminating them.” Libraries throughout the country that have adopted fine free policies are seeing the same rate on return of items, even when fines no longer apply.

“Going fine free will allow more people to enjoy our materials for education, enrichment, and inspiration. Charges will still apply for lost or damaged items, but returning items late is no longer a concern; however, we will still encourage the return of materials on-

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time, so other community members can enjoy those materials too,” continued Deputy Director Fontanilla.

This new policy has been approved by the Stockton City Council and the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors and applies to all libraries within the cities of Stockton, Escalon, Lathrop, Linden, Manteca, Mountain House, Ripon, Thornton, and Tracy and the Bookmobile.

For more information on the library, including our programs and services, please call (209) 937-8221 or visit our website at www.ssjcpl.org.

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