

Changes to Long Overdue Process

Proposed Change to Policy:

Submitted by Beth McIntyre, Director of Piedmont Regional Library System

Brief summary:

- Reduce the time period for automatically marking items "Long Overdue" from 180 days to 90 days.
- Add an additional automated email notification at 60 days overdue.

Detailed proposal:

<https://pines.georgialibraries.org/sites/default/files/Al-4%20Long%20Overdue%20Process%20Changes.pdf>

Survey Results

The following summary is based on survey results from 39 PINES Subcommittee members and Directors representing 29 library systems. Two questions were asked.

1. **Should an item be marked Long Overdue and the patron billed at 90 days (3 months) instead of the current 180 days (6 months)?**

Overall Responses:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	36	92%
No	3	8%

Responses by Circulation Subcommittee Members Only:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	0	0%

Responses from Other Subcommittee Members:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	10	91%
No	1	9%

Responses from Directors who are not subcommittee members:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	21	91%
No	2	9%

2. Should patrons be sent an additional overdue notice at 60 days overdue?**Overall Responses:**

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	39	100%
No	0	0%

Comments:

- After 60 days, there is still a chance that the material can be found and return. For anything past the 3 month mark, the chances of those items being recovered is very, very slim in my opinion and experience.
- An additional overdue notice which includes item prices + processing fees per item is definitely a good idea, whether the Long Overdue status is at 90 or 180 days.
- Concerns regarding PLAY cards and concerns regarding going fine free at some point.
- Great idea. 90 days is plenty of time for something to be returned. An extra notice is a good idea.
- I believe this will also help our selectors. We use the LOD list to prompt purchasing replacement copies, and 6 months is really too long to wait.
- I like the idea of sending notices at 60 and 90 days, stating what the replacement costs would be. I don't like the idea of shortening the Long Overdue from 180 to 90, however. We *just* signed on with PLAY cards (and are in process with one more school system), and I'd hate to change the terms so quickly. The "no fines unless books aren't returned by 180 days" was a big talking point.
- I would just like to make sure changing the overdue notice cycle doesn't impact the PINES budget in terms of increasing costs dramatically by sending notices more and/or more often. If that seems likely, could the change take place during the FY23 budget cycle?
- If the measure fails to pass, then please consider adding a 90 day letter notice to assist with the communication lag Beth mentions in the original submitted change.

- One of our Library Managers said that they did not think the Long Overdue billing period needed to be changed. They said that the long-overdue items that they see are usually very long-overdue - over 12 months - so didn't see a need to change the time frame. All our other Library Managers were overwhelmingly in favor of changing the time to 90 days. They felt that the shorter time frame might encourage patrons to return materials before they forget they have them checked out.
- Sooner is better than later. Additional notice is helpful. Patrons do need to be told the amount they will be charged. That is an extra incentive.
- Strongly support this proposal.
- Thank you!
- This is a great idea.

Clarification from PINES Staff on the Billing Amount:

The automated notification that gets sent after an item is marked Long Overdue sends the amount that is *actually* owed, which may or may not be the same as the item price.

Several suggestions have been made to include the amount that will be billed with the overdue notices, but it is not feasible for the notification process to accurately predict the exact amount for several reasons:

1. The notification process is unable to adjust for overdue payments that have already been made on the item that will be adjusted off when the Long Overdue process runs.
2. The notification process is unable to add the library-specific Long Overdue processing fees per item.
3. The notification process is unable to determine whether or not the patron has already been turned over to a collections agency (in which case the Long Overdue process will not run on that item).
4. Some items may have an empty item price (in which case they would be billed the default item price of \$25.01).

So, if the notification is updated to include an item price, it will only be an estimated amount.