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Contact:  
Arlene Caruso, Director  
Newtown Public Library  
610-393-1022 x103  
Email: [nedirector@delcolibraries.org](mailto:nedirector@delcolibraries.org)

## Newtown Public Library closes the book on fines

**Newtown Square, PA** (May 4, 2022) – Effective May 18, 2022, the Newtown Public Library will close the book on overdue fines by no longer charging late fines on books or other circulating materials. The library will also erase all past overdue library fines from Newtown Township patron records. This change is part of an institutional movement from a growing number of libraries around Pennsylvania and the country to eliminate barriers to access and ensure that patrons have free, equitable, and open access to knowledge and opportunity. The Newtown Public Library is the first Delaware County library to make this change.

Fines can potentially be an obstacle that disproportionately impact people without the means to pay. Removing these fines (while still requiring the items to be returned) will allow more people to enjoy what the library has to offer. Patrons will still need to pay for lost or damaged items. Overdue materials from other Delaware County libraries may incur fines. The library still encourages patrons to bring back materials on time to make them available to others who would like to borrow them.

“We are committed to our new mission that encourages the joy of reading, the exploration of ideas, and the pursuit of lifelong learning for all,” stressed Newtown Public Library Director, Arlene Caruso. “A fine of \$5 may not break the bank for some patrons but for others with a fixed income or limited financial resources this fine may keep them away from the library. We want everyone in Newtown Township to feel encouraged to check out reading and other materials for themselves and their families. We also want to avoid penalizing busy families who might accidentally miss a due date and encourage them to make the library an important part of their daily lives.”

The Newtown Public Library Board of Trustees voted unanimously in April 2022 to eliminate overdue fines. 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”. Read the entire resolution here: <https://bit.ly/3MVK2TD>

The Newtown Public Library, located at 201 Bishop Hollow Road in Newtown Square, is a member of Delaware County Libraries. For more information on the library and library services, please visit the library’s website at <http://newtownlibrary.org/>