

Board Motion Number:	16-2022	Date of Review:	2025
Date Approved:	July 11, 2022	Chairperson's signature:	

Membership and Circulation Policy

BACKGROUND

The Oxford County Library provides a wide variety of lending material available in both physical and digital formats. These items are freely available to all those that hold an Oxford County Library card.

The library ensures fair conditions and equitable access for library membership and borrowing privileges, while protecting resources in a responsible manner and in accordance with the *Public Libraries Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.44.

In an effort to reduce barriers to access, the Oxford County Library Board eliminated the collection of overdue fines for materials in 2018.

PURPOSE

This policy serves to provide parameters for membership, borrowing of materials and all other related services at the Oxford County Library.

PROCEDURES

Library Membership

1. Oxford County Library provides free membership to all Oxford County residents. Staff may request identification with the applicant's current address (photo ID preferred).
2. Once obtaining a library card, borrowers agree to abide by the policies and procedures of the library. Cardholders are responsible for any items borrowed on the card, until a card is reported lost or stolen.
3. Oxford County Library participates in reciprocal borrowing agreements with other libraries in Southwestern Ontario. Libraries included in this agreement are:
 - a. County of Brant Public Library
 - b. Elgin County Library
 - c. Middlesex County Library
 - d. Norfolk County Public Library
 - e. Region of Waterloo Library
 - f. London Public Library
 - g. St. Mary's Public Library
 - h. Stratford Public Library

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Residents of communities in the reciprocal borrowing agreement are welcome to apply for an Oxford County Library card. Oxford County Library members may also visit any of the above listed libraries with identification and their OCL card to obtain a library membership at that location.

4. Non-residents who do not live in areas with reciprocal borrowing privileges may apply for a library card by presenting proof of home address.
5. Children and teens are eligible for an Oxford County Library card.
 - a. Parents/Caregivers may apply on behalf of their child, up to and including the age of 13.
 - b. Teens, 14 years old and over, may apply for a library card without parental consent, provided they can provide their own identification. Examples of identification include: a student ID Card, a bill or recent piece of mail with name and address, a report card.
 - c. Library card applications may be made available for teachers and/or care providers to have cards prepared for children in anticipation of class visits and/or tours. Applications for children ages 13 and under must be signed by a parent/caregiver in order for the card to be issued.
6. Staff members of Oxford County daycare centres, institutions, schools, agencies, organizations and supportive housing facilities may apply for a community card. Community card applications requires the signature or letter of intent of an administrator, manager or principle of the organization who is authorized to accept financial responsibility for the organization. The staff member seeking a community card must present proof of affiliation with the group or institution.

Community cards carry additional conditions for use:

- a. Community cards cannot be used for personal use.
 - b. Oxford County Library reserves the right to impose limitations on the amount and type of material available, or to shorten/extend the loan period.
 - c. Library digital media and DVDs are for personal use only, unless otherwise stated. Organizations that wish to make use of library media must obtain a public performance license to use these collections in a public setting.
7. Library cards expire two years from the date of registration and may be renewed with verification of the card holder's current address. A card may not be renewed if the account status is Blocked.
 8. A replacement fee may be charged for any lost or damaged card.

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Borrowing Privileges and Responsibilities

Equal access to library services and materials depends on the reasonable use of such services and materials by all library members.

Conditions of Membership

Library members shall:

1. Present a valid Oxford County Library card when borrowing material or requesting account information;
2. Report any changes to one's information as soon as possible. Lost or stolen cards should be reported to any branch library immediately;
3. Pay any fees incurred for damage or lost library material.

Borrowing

1. Loan periods and lending limits may vary. Please refer to the Oxford County Library website for the most up to date information.
2. Extended loan period requests may be granted, subject to staff discretion, and is based on the number and types of material available.
3. The library reserves the right to limit the loan period and/or number of items borrowed on the basis of local demand and material supply.
4. Materials may be returned to any Oxford County Library branch.
5. The library automatically renews all eligible library materials until items reach their maximum renewal limit. Customers may opt-out of this service.
6. Items not eligible for renewal include:
 - a. Items with holds
 - b. Quick Picks
 - c. DVD Binge Boxes
 - d. Park Passes
 - e. Other specialty collections
7. The library reminds customers to return overdue materials through a series of mailed, emailed notices culminating in a bill for lost material after 12 weeks.

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Holds

1. Customers may place a hold on any item owned by the library or on order.
2. Customers may place holds via the library's online catalogue, in person at any branch, or by telephone during open hours.
3. When a hold is available, the customer will be notified by email, text message or auto phone service. Hold materials are held at the requested branch location for seven (7) days. If items are not picked-up within the seven (7) days, the hold will be removed.
4. Customers may cancel or suspend holds via the library's online catalogue, in person at any branch or by phone during open hours.

Lost / Damaged Items

1. Library members shall report lost or damaged items at the earliest possible opportunity.
2. Charges for lost / damaged items are based on the cost of each individual item. At the discretion of staff, a lost / damage fee may be reduced or waived depending on the age of the item and the circumstances of the situation.
3. Repeated loss, damage or misuse of library material will result in the suspension of library privileges, exclusion from the library and/or prosecution.
4. Replacement copies or donations in lieu of payment may not be accepted.
5. Refunds will be issued for lost items returned to the library in good condition within six (6) months after the charges for the item have been paid. Lost and paid material charges will first be applied to any further outstanding charges on the customer's account, any remaining balance will be refunded.
6. Refunds of \$10 or less will be issued by branch staff by cash or as a credit on the customer's account. Amounts over \$10 will be issued by cheque.

Suspension of Borrowing Privileges

1. Borrowing privileges will be suspended when library members have fees and/or overdue materials in excess of the maximum allowable amount.
 - a. Adult Card Maximums:
 - i. Ten (10) overdue items
 - ii. \$30 or more in fees
 - b. Child / Teen Card Maximums:

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- i. Twenty (20) overdue items
 - ii. \$50 or more in fees
2. Accounts suspended due to overdue items or outstanding balances will be reactivated when the total number of overdue items or balance owing falls below the threshold.

Interlibrary Loans (ILLO)

Oxford County Library is committed to resource-sharing with other libraries in order to help meet the needs of our library members' educational and entertainment needs. To meet those needs, the library participates in the Information Network For Ontario (INFO) system.

1. Oxford County Library customers with a valid library card may request the loan of items not in the library's collection through ILLO at any branch or online using the requested module.
2. The library limits the number of requests per borrower in order to keep the service as cost effective as possible.
3. The library may limit the formats available for lending/borrowing through this service.
4. The library will not borrow items that have a financial penalty imposed by the lending institution.
5. Items borrowed for a customer through the ILLO service will have a standard loan period, unless otherwise specified by the lending institution.
6. ILLO items are not available for automatic renewal. Renewal of borrowed items are at the discretion of the lending institution.
7. Customers with overdue ILLO items will be subject to a suspension of borrowing privileges until the ILLO item is returned.
8. The loss of an ILLO item will result in the termination of ILLO borrowing privileges.
9. ILLO items not picked up within seven (7) days after being notified may result in the loss of ILLO privileges.

Confidentiality of Personal Information

Oxford County Library respects the privacy of all library members and will keep all information related to membership confidential in accordance with the Library's *Privacy and Access to Personal Information Policy*.

1. Identification documents are used to verify name and address only when applying for a library membership. No other information on the document(s) presented is kept or recorded.

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- Confidentiality of all personal information held by Oxford County Library in matters relating to lending services is governed by the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*, and related County of Oxford policies, including: *Anti-Spam Policy* and *Access and Privacy Policy*.

References and Related Documents

Oxford County Library Policies

Oxford County Library. (2015, June). *Privacy and Access to Personal Information Policy*. <https://www.ocl.net/Portals/OxfordCountyLibrary/Documents/policies/Protection%20of%20Privacy%20and%20Access%20to%20Information%20Policy.pdf>

County of Oxford Policies

County of Oxford. (2014, August). *Anti-Spam Policy*.

County of Oxford. (2019, November). *Access and Privacy Policy*.

Legislation

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56

Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.44