

CIRCULATION POLICY

Purpose of Policy

This Circulation Policy covers library card registration criteria and related matters. Specific information about borrowing, loan periods, fines and fees can be found on the Library's [website](#) and at the Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library (HEML) service desks.

Confidentiality of Library User Records

The HEML will abide by the North Carolina General Statute on Confidentiality of Library User Records (§ 125-19), which states—

(a) Disclosure. -- A library shall not disclose any library record that identifies a person as having requested or obtained specific materials, information, or services, or as otherwise having used the library, except as provided for in subsection (b).

(b) Exceptions. -- Library records may be disclosed in the following instances:

- (1) When necessary for the reasonable operation of the library;
- (2) Upon written consent of the user; or
- (3) Pursuant to subpoena, court order, or where otherwise required by law.

Library Cards

All persons who reside on property within the corporate town limits of the Town of Clayton are entitled to a HEML card at no cost. One piece of current identification showing your name and address inside the town limits is required.

- A parent or legal guardian is responsible for the use of library materials by children under the age of 16.
- Any young adult 16 years of age and older may apply for their own card. They must have proof of residency in their own name.
- Children under the age of seven may borrow items on their parent/guardian's card. *Children from the age of 7-15 can be issued their own library card with a parent/guardian signature.*
- Library cards are valid for 1 year from the date of issue, with the exception of some temporary living situations when shorter expiration dates may be issued.

- Library cards are not transferable either permanently or temporarily.
- A library card is not to be used by any person other than the person to whom it is issued. There is only one exception to this rule: the card of a patron registered as Patron Type “Homebound” may be used by someone designated by the patron.

Education Employees

- Persons who work for educational institutions within Johnston County may obtain a free library card under the name of the organization for which they work. *Proof of current employment/affiliation with the institution for which the card will be used must be presented when the card is requested.*
- This card entitles the organization to all services provided by HEML.

Non-Resident Property Owner

- Non-residents who own and pay taxes on property within the corporate town limits of the Town of Clayton are entitled to a HEML library card, at no cost. A current tax bill must be presented along with current photo identification.
- One library card per tax bill will be issued for a period of one year.
- The card entitles the cardholder to all services provided by the HEML.

Non-Resident

- Persons who do not pay Town of Clayton taxes may purchase a non-resident borrower’s card according to guidelines found in [Chapter 153A Article 14](#) (Libraries) of North Carolina General Statutes.
- The fee structure for this card is set each year by the Town of Clayton Town Council.

Non-Resident Family

- A family non-resident borrower’s card will be issued to any family with two or more children residing at the same legal address of the applicant.
- Only be used by the patron to whom the card was issued.

Non-Resident Internet Use

- Offered to out-of-town guest who need to use our public kiosks for an hour.
- Visitors must provide valid driver’s license.
- No physical card is issued for this service; an internet-use registration form.
- The fee for this card is set each year by the Town of Clayton Town Council.²

Town Employees

- HEML cards are issued as a courtesy to all Town of Clayton employees regardless of County residency.
- A Town Employee card is valid for the duration of employment with the Town of Clayton.

Renewal of Library Cards

- Library cards have an expiration date. To renew HEML card, a patron must prove his/her identity and residency within the corporate town limits of Clayton in the same way as for the original card application.
- All fines and fees must be paid before a card can be renewed.

Lost or Stolen Library Cards

- Cardholders are responsible for materials checked out on their cards until the card is reported lost or stolen to the HEML.
- A fee is charged for the replacement of a current library card.
- To replace a lost or stolen card, a patron must prove his/her identity and residency in the same way as in the original card application.
- Library user fees will be as listed in the [Town of Clayton Comprehensive List of Fees and Charges](#).

“Card In Hand” Requirements

To conduct circulation transactions or to receive information about a cardholder's circulation records, patrons must present a valid library card. Patrons conducting business by phone must provide the library card barcode number. Discretionary exceptions to this policy may be made for the occasional forgotten library card if the patron offers valid identification or is identified by a member of the library staff.

Responsibilities of Cardholders

- Cardholders are responsible for all materials borrowed on their card. This includes returning the materials in a timely manner and in the same condition as when the materials were borrowed.
- Materials kept out beyond the loan periods will be considered overdue, and fine or replacement fees will be assessed. Replacement and processing fees will be assessed for lost, damaged or unreturned materials.

- Overdue notices are mailed as a courtesy. Patrons are responsible for the timely return of materials whether or not they receive the overdue notice. Any uncollected fees in excess of \$50 will be subject to collection through the NC Debt Setoff Program.
- Having overdue materials, fines or fees on library cards may cause borrowing or service restrictions.
- Cardholders or parents/guardians of cardholders under 16 years of age are also responsible for notifying HEML of any change of address, email address or telephone number.
- According to [North Carolina statute Chapter 14-398](#) it is considered theft to borrow but not return library materials.

Use of Library Materials by the Public

1. All Library collections are available to the general public for in-house use.
2. Some restrictions apply to in-house equipment and computer use.
3. Some restrictions apply to use of fragile or valuable collections, including some archival collections.

Circulation Periods

Circulation of library materials will be as follows:

- High demand items and best sellers circulate 1 week (best sellers of 400+ pages will circulate for 2 weeks.)
- All other materials circulate 3 weeks.

Renewal of Library Materials

Renewal can be done in person, by telephone or online.

- Renewal requires the library card on which the items were checked out.
- Telephone renewal can be done by calling HEML during our operating hours.
- Items that are reserved for use by another patron cannot be renewed.
- Internet Renewal is available from HEML Online Catalog. Just click on the My Account tab on any page of the Catalog and input your library card number and PIN. Some items may not be renewed with the online renewal system. Please contact the HEML for more details.

Fines and Fees

Fees for overdue library materials will be as listed in the [Town of Clayton Comprehensive List of Fees and Charges](#).

Overdue Notices

Courtesy Email

Patrons with an email address listed in their library account will receive an email two days before an item is due back to the library. Courtesy email reminders will allow patrons the chance to renew materials or to return them, so fines can be avoided. Failure to receive a courtesy email reminder does not absolve the patron of responsibility for accrued late fines..

First Notice at 2 Weeks

The first overdue notice will be sent to the patron email address of record when the item is 2 weeks overdue. The notice will include a list of overdue materials. If an email address is not listed in the patron's library account, the first overdue notice may be sent as a phone text or voicemail.

Failure to return the overdue items within seven (7) working days of the date of the notice will result in a suspension of a cardholder's borrowing privileges until the account is cleared.

Failure to return the overdue items within 4 weeks of the original due date will result in a charge to the cardholder's account for the replacement cost of the materials.

Second Notice: Bill for replacement at 4 weeks

The second overdue notice will be sent when the item is 4 weeks overdue. This notice will include a bill for the replacement cost of the items. If the overdue items are subsequently located and returned to HEML, the patron will only be responsible for paying the overdue fines.

Lost and Damaged Items

Fees for items that are lost or damaged will equal the list/retail price of the item as well as the processing cost, e.g. spine label, book cover, book tape, MARC record, etc.

Fine/fee Collection

Library patrons or the parents of juvenile library patrons are expected to return library materials promptly and to pay any fines incurred.

1. Status of borrowing privileges if the patron has outstanding fees/fines.
 - a. If an item is more than 14 days overdue, borrowing privileges are suspended until the materials are returned and the fine is paid.
 - b. If a patron's account totals more than \$25.00, borrowing privileges are suspended unless:
 - the patron is paying through an approved installment plan. Information on this plan will be entered into the patron record. It will be removed upon final payment.
 - there are exceptions noted on the patron's record.

Notations to a patron record will be eliminated when his/her account is settled.

2. Claims return

On occasion a library patron reports to the library that an overdue notice has been sent in error, and the items have already been returned. This is referred to as a "claims return" response.

The library will accept a patron's claimed returned response five times. Each instance will be noted in the patron's account.

After five (5) instances, the library will assume that there is a possibility of false reports of “claims return.” The most recent “claims return” items will be considered overdue on the patron’s account. The patron will be expected to return the items or reimburse the library for the lost materials according to the fee schedule listed.

Failure to pay for lost items may result in suspended library privileges. Any fee in excess of \$50 will be subject to collection through the North Carolina Debt Setoff Program. As authorized by the North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 105A, the Setoff Debt Collection Act (the “Act”), the Town of Clayton will submit debt to the North Carolina Department of Revenue for collection by applying the debt against any income tax refund in excess of \$50 that you may be entitled to receive or from lottery proceeds.

Confidentiality

This confidentiality policy applies equally to adults and minors. When an adult requests the records of a child, the library will respond only if the child consents to the request.

Staff may respond to telephone requests for information about materials checked out to patron accounts (adult or child) if the caller has the barcode number on the library card.