

## 4.01 BORROWER'S POLICY



**POLICY NUMBER:** 4.01

**SCOPE:** This policy defines who is eligible for a WCLS library card and limitations to borrowing privileges.

---

### **A. The Whatcom County Library System (WCLS) is a system of libraries serving the diverse needs of area residents of all ages.**

All WCLS branches and bookmobile are open to the public. Anyone may browse or use materials, attend WCLS programs, and otherwise use services in WCLS facilities.

### **B. Eligibility for a Library Card**

The following categories of individuals are eligible to register for WCLS library cards with provision of current address and proof of identity:

1. **All residents of Whatcom County.**

**NOTE:** Residents of the City of Bellingham will be provided a Bellingham Public Library card when registering at WCLS and may use their Bellingham Public Library cards to borrow materials at WCLS libraries and bookmobile through a reciprocal agreement.

2. **Non-residents of the Library District who pay taxes to support the Library District,** such as individuals who work in Whatcom County or own businesses or property located in Whatcom County.

3. **Students who attend school in Whatcom County,** including college and university students from out of the area and elementary and secondary students from neighboring counties.

4. **Residents of communities with which WCLS has a reciprocal borrowing agreement, including but not limited to:**

a. Fraser Valley Regional Library (British Columbia, Canada)

5. **Residents of jurisdictions within Washington State that provide equitable tax support for public library service.** In addition to current address and proof of identity, applicants must present a library card from their local jurisdiction.

**NOTE:** Borrowing privileges for electronic materials and/or access to online services may be limited depending on vendor contracts.

6. **Nonresidents of the Library District** who do not meet the criteria described in sections 2, 3, 4 or 5 above may purchase a library card for an annual fee to borrow materials.

7. **Whatcom County business firms and institutions** may be issued agency library cards upon the written approval of the owner and/or official authorized to enter contracts on behalf of the business or institution.

8. **Minors under 18 years of age** may receive a limited use library card without an adult's signature or a full use library card with a parent's or guardian's signature.

Parent/guardian signatures will not be required for a full use card for minors who are demonstrably free of parental control, such as through marriage.

### **C. Limitations on borrowing privileges**

1. **Borrowing privileges may be denied for:**
  - a. **Failure to return overdue WCLS materials or failure to pay for damaged or overdue materials.** Money received for lost material will be refunded or credited if the materials are returned within one year of the last transaction.
  - b. **Due cause**, including failure to comply with WCLS rules, destruction of WCLS property, and disturbance of other WCLS patrons. See WCLS Disruptive Behavior Policy.
2. **Lost or stolen cards:** Lost or stolen library cards should be reported to the WCLS immediately. A replacement card will be issued at no cost.
3. **It is recommended that library cards not be loaned as the Borrower is still responsible for all materials borrowed on the card.**
4. **Borrowers are normally expected to authenticate their eligibility to borrow materials each time they wish to borrow materials from the WCLS.**
5. **Effective January 1, 2020, WCLS will no longer levy overdue fees.**
6. **Other charges, as outlined in 4.01.04 Fee Schedule:**
  - a. Item(s) will be considered lost, and the borrower will be charged a replacement fee, when WCLS materials are not returned within a number of days, as specified in the Fee Schedule.
  - b. If an item is returned damaged or with missing parts, the borrower will be charged according to guidelines maintained by WCLS.
  - c. Past due financial accounts may be submitted to a private collection agency for collection. An additional fee(s) may be charged to any account submitted to a collection agency.
7. **Exceptions:**
  - a. Fines and other charges may be waived in cases of WCLS error or exceptional circumstances, according to guidelines established by WCLS.
  - b. If a payment plan is developed and followed, collection agency accounts may be temporarily suspended and limited checkout privileges may be restored.

### **D. Privacy**

**It is the policy of Whatcom County Library System to protect the privacy of library borrowers. See the WCLS Policy on Confidentiality of Patron Records.**

---

**RELATED POLICIES:**      4.01.04 Fee Schedule  
                                 5.01 Confidentiality of Patron Records Policy

---

ADOPTED by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees August 16, 1994.

**REVISED: January 21, 2020;** September 17, 2019; December 18, 2018; June 20, 2017; March 28, 2017; July 19, 2016; August 20, 2013; September 18, 2012; December 17, 2010; May 18, 2010; March 17, 2009; Dec. 16, 2008; May 20, 2008; September 9, 2007; May 24, 2005; July 22, 2004; September 16, 2003; November 21, 2000; March 18, 1997

---

Signed by Marvin Waschke, Board Chair, January 21, 2020