

## Question on merging patrons at school libraries

Responses on following question:

*The Circulation Committee is working on a policy for merging patron records. Before they start drafting the policy they would like your input:*

*How do you handle merging patron records at this point? They would like to focus on how to handle situations when a patron has fine/lost items at a previous school. Do you block the patrons for charges accrued at a previous school? or do you let them start new at your school?*

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Carlyle starts new at our school.

Thanks.

LuAlice H. Kampwerth, Carlyle Junior High Media Specialist

We block them on fines from schools within our district. We don't want that to change. However, we have never had a student move in with another school library card. When a student leaves our district, he/she is required to pay all outstanding fees, including library fines.

Kathy Wickline, Unity Junior High Librarian, Tolono, IL

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Central High School normally allows them to start new. I always help another library get an item back when I can, but we don't charge them the money owed. Britni Rolfingsmeier

Marshall School Libraries let students start new here.

I have not ever merged patron records.

I don't expect other school libraries to block students who have fine/lost items here. We will mail letters to those who leave forwarding addresses. And if we aren't able to recover OUR items we take the loss and delete their account. I wait about 6 months before I delete their accounts.

Now students who move from here, and have checked out/overdue/lost items via interlibrary loan--- I talk to the lending library who either forgives the loss or request that we pay for the item.

Often these students are transient and aren't here for long before they move back or on to somewhere else.

Luckily library books are on the "exit sheet" check list for students who are moving and we get most items before they leave.

I would consider blocking students for charges accrued at their previous school if I had time to research where students came from, locate that library record, etc. Katie Dailey

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Esther,

I was under the impression that schools weren't allowed to touch other library's patron records. So I always make new records for new students.

If a student moves from my school with fines I just let them sit. If a student has books, I contact the parents and/or new school to see if I can have any luck getting them back. I keep the fine/items in the record until after their expected graduation date in case the student comes back to me. Jacob Roskovensky

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Hi Esther,

I'm responding back to the email Michelle sent about Circulation.

We don't merge any patron records for our schools. Since our patron barcodes are school specific we just issue them a new one when they move to another of our buildings. If they move within the district and they owe books to the library they are leaving, the assistants contact each other to try and get the book back. After some time if we don't get it back we just remove it from their record anyway. So in a sense the new school will block them from checking out, they just don't merge the records together to tell them that. It's just what we've always done.

If they move out of our district, I make contact if the assistant asks me to. If we know they are for sure gone, often we just clear it and move on after a quarter. We have had schools merge their records into ours and we find it when a student disappears that we haven't deleted, we find them by name, and then we notice that our information is still in their record, it just has a new barcode. Not sure that is really merging.

If they move in to our district, we don't usually look to see if they have been at another library in our area so they always start new. I've had schools contact me about trying to get a book that a student who moved had and we do what we can.

We just want to get our kids checking out again as soon as possible, so we try to just move on and start fresh.

Hope this helps.

Sonya Johnson, Information Media Coordinator

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Hi Esther,

At this point, we allow them to start over when they come from another school. I am certain there is a pattern though, of students who do not return things and how they move around and then take more items. It is definitely a real problem.

Lisa Story, District Librarian, Bismarck-Henning CUSD #1

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I haven't had a student come in with fines from another school that I have noticed. I have had students leave our school with my books and if I find them in the library system at another school, I contact the librarian at that school and ask for help getting my books returned. If there's a fine, I don't worry about it, it's the materials I want returned. Other school librarians in my area have been helpful. If I don't check right away, I honestly forget all about it. I doubt I would per sue it as it is difficult to know that it's the same student just by seeing the name in the computer system two years later. (we don't all use birthdays in the system) I really blame my school for not withholding transcripts until all school books and library books are returned to the school.

We don't have an exit procedure for students that would prevent this. Shelli Thomas

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Esther,

We give students a clean slate when they start at our school.

We do have a number of students who move back and forth between Salem and Centralia, and the librarian at Centralia & I have emailed back and forth in the past, saying "heads up" or "Ask that student about this book," but we do not block them from checking out. We want them to read, and several teachers require quarterly book projects.

If new students began with a block, they would be blocked in 3M Cloud library also. We have 1:1 ipads that work well with Cloud Library; in fact, several freshmen teachers encourage Cloud library with students who are chronically overdue, so that I'm not darkening their door about overdue books.

Our school's Cloud Library usage may change with the new Open Ebooks that started this month. Open Ebooks will be better for quarterly class projects because of the 8 week checkout and no wait list. Open Ebooks gives us no circ stats and will not interface with Polaris-- it's just good books to encourage reading.

Thanks for all the listening and work you are doing on these policies, Marji Gibbs

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Hi, Esther,

This is a hot topic for me! We have about a 33% mobility rate, which means a LOT of our books move away. When a student comes to my school, the first thing I do is to check for an existing school (NOT public) record for them. Apparently I am one of the very few people who does this, and I think it should be mandatory. In fact, I always thought it was! I make a new record for my moved-in student, then merge their former school's record into the new one. Their debts and items follow right along, and they are held responsible for them at my school. They need to return the books they moved with, or pay for them, before checking out at my school. I am fairly strict about this, unless years have gone by and/or poverty is involved.

I have found new records for my "moved" students and merged my old record into the new one, and the person at their new school actually deleted the item(s) they owed to my school. This boggles the mind. I do try to contact their new school to let them know what I have done, even though it is part of the transaction history.

I am not usually so uptight about things, but good grief, are we really going to teach our students that it's okay to essentially steal library books, and to have no accountability whatsoever? You can tell I have very strong feelings about this...and maybe if other schools lost hundreds of dollars' worth of books each and every year, they would feel the same way.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on this matter. Alisa Simpson

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I do not let students check out books at my library until they take care of lost books at their previous school. Stephanie Betts

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At our school district, our students get a patron library barcode when entering Kindergarten. This card number stays with them throughout their time in the district--basically K-12. When a student leaves a building, the aid sends the physical card, with their name and barcode on it, to the next building. They are filed at that building and their address one is changed to their designated teacher for the year and the current school year listed. Fines are not charged at the elementary level; however, if there is a lost book on their record, it stays there until it has been dealt with--even if the student has moved on to another building. Fines do carry over from the junior high building to the high school, as well as any fees for lost or damaged materials.

We do not merge their records, just keep the cards active until they have moved or graduated. And some of them return! Surprise, surprise! lol.

Mary Ann Lowry, Library Specialist  
Taylorville Junior High, Taylorville Elementary  
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Esther,

I do not merge patrons. I do see if they have another school account and if they have books out under that account, but I always create from scratch. I contact the school if they do have books out and limit them to one of my books at a time until it is taken care of. Hope that helps.

Valerie brunner, Mt. Zion, IL 62549  
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We start with a new patron and do not use records from other schools. We use to hold transcripts if a student owed anything to us and was moving to a new district, but now I am told that is not legal.

Julie Balgeman, Westville High School  
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Hi Esther! I don't believe I've ever had a student's book issues from another school follow them to me - I've never been contacted to try and collect a book and send it back or collect payment to send it back. When my students move away and I still have books out for them, we try and contact the parent to see if they can get it back to us, and occasionally I will send an email to the new school asking for help. If I remember correctly, it is usually due to the parents sending books back that I ever get anything. I try and make myself a note in case the student comes back at a later time. If there was an easy way to coordinate getting lost books back due to move-in/move-out kids, I'd be happy to help other libraries. My students don't always move to another school that has IHLS/SHARE though.

Hope this helps - let me know if you need any further info. Thanks,  
Amy Holtsclaw, Athens School District