



Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

St. Thomas Catholic Camp

P.O. Box 1399 * Great Falls, Montana 59403 * (406) 727-6683

www.diocesegfb.org



Camper Handbook

Policies and Procedures

ST. THOMAS CATHOLIC CAMP FAMILIES

Revised November 2025

Table of Contents

1.0 - Introduction.....	5
1.1 - Mission.....	5
1.2 - Vision	5
1.3 – Core Values	6
2.0 – Preparing for Camp.....	6
2.1 - What to Expect.....	6
2.2 - Packing List.....	6
2.2.1 – Personal Property.....	6
2.2.2 – Food Restrictions.....	7
2.2.3 - Medications	7
2.2.4 – Personal Electronic Devices	7
2.2.5 - Camp Attire	8
2.2.6 - Packing List Summary	8
3.0 – Camper Policies and Procedures.....	10
3.1 - Arrival	10
3.1.1 - Late Arrival	11
3.1.2 - Absences.....	11
3.2 - Departure.....	11
3.2.1 - Written Notice Required	11
3.2.2 - Early Departure	12
3.3 – Illness.....	12
3.4 - Cancellation Notification and Fee	12

3.5 - Camper Orientation	13
3.6 – Camp Boundaries and Restrictions	13
3.6.1 - Restrictions.....	14
3.6.2 – Belt Creek Rules.....	14
3.7 – Bus Transportation	14
3.8 – Camper Behavior and Code of Conduct	15
3.8.1 - Zero Tolerance Guidelines.....	15
3.8.2 – Bullying	16
3.9 - Illegal Substances, Drugs, Tobacco, and Weapons	17
3.10 - Approach to Discipline	17
3.11 – Conflict Resolution.....	18
3.12 - Communication.....	18
3.12.1 - Parents/guardians to Camp Manager	18
3.12.2 – Campers and Home	19
3.12.2 – Letters and Packages	19
3.13 – Photos and Videos for Publicity.....	20
3.14 - Insurance	20
4.0 – Emergency Procedures.....	20
4.1 - General Emergency Protocol	20
4.2 - Injured Person (Camper or Staff Member)	21
4.3 – Serious Accidents and Emergencies	21
4.4 - Evacuation Plan: Fire or Flood	22
4.5 - Missing Person (Camper or Staff Member).....	22

4.6 – Wildlife Safety Guidelines	22
4.6.1 - General Wildlife Interaction	23
4.6.2 - Deer Encounters	23
4.6.3 - Bear Encounters	23
4.6.4 - Mountain Lion Encounters.....	24
4.6.5 - Emergency Contact Information.....	24
4.7 – Severe Weather Conditions	25
5.0 - Camp Contact Information	26
5.1 - Location Address	26
5.2 - Driving Directions.....	26
5.2.1 - From Great Falls.....	26
5.2.2 - From White Sulphur Springs	26
5.3 - Emergency Services: dial 911.....	26
5.4 - St. Thomas Catholic Camp Contacts	27
5.4.1 - Landline Phone Numbers	27
5.4.2 - Camp Staff.....	27

1.0 - Introduction

Welcome to St. Thomas Catholic Camp! Montana is often hailed as God's Country. It's not hard to see why that's true spending a week up at St. Thomas Catholic Camp located in the beautiful Little Belt Mountains.

St. Thomas Catholic Camp had its humble beginnings in the 1920s. The Sisters of Providence who ran an orphanage in town began taking the children for excursions in the Monarch wilderness. On April 15, 1958, the sisters purchased the Karlson Ranch and called their new property St. Thomas Catholic Camp. Through the work of many volunteers, the ranch was transformed into a camping facility.

In 1986, the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings purchased the camp with the purpose of using the facility to help teenagers experience Christ through a series of annual summer camps. We pride ourselves on giving our campers the best experience possible. To ensure this, we have the following policies and procedures in place to make camp a fun and safe experience for all involved.

1.1 - Mission

St. Thomas Catholic Summer Camp's mission is to actively create a space where youth encounter Jesus Christ through daily sacramental life, intentional community, and the awe of creation; inspiring them to grow as disciples who carry their faith into the world.

1.2 - Vision

We envision a world where young people are empowered through sacramental grace and a profound connection to God's creation, to live vibrant lives as faithful witnesses to Christ, rooted in truth, love, and service, in part because of the time they spent at St. Thomas Catholic Camp.

1.3 – Core Values

St. Thomas Catholic Camp will hold ourselves and each other accountable to love each other and strive to live lives of:

- **Spirituality** - we nurture personal connections with God through prayer, Scripture, the Sacraments, and the teachings of the Catholic Church
- **Service** - we put others first and look for opportunities to help
- **Integrity** - we do what is right and apologize when we don't
- **Flexibility** - we adapt quickly and easily to changing plans and circumstances

2.0 – Preparing for Camp

2.1 - What to Expect

St. Thomas Catholic Camp participants can expect an environment with limited technology in the great outdoors with other Catholic youth. It is intentionally set up for campers to deepen their faith in a community setting through authentic encounters with Jesus Christ. Camp prayer opportunities include daily Mass, adoration, Eucharistic procession (weather permitting), reconciliation, faith-based formative talks by camp staff, and night prayer around the firepit. Campers can enjoy God's great creation during numerous recreational activities including hiking, skit night, campfire songs, creek float, Newcomb ball, rock wall climbing, field games, and more!

2.2 - Packing List

2.2.1 – Personal Property

St. Thomas Catholic Camp staff are not responsible for the loss or damage of any personal property. Campers are responsible for collecting and accounting for all personal belongings each day. To prevent loss, all campers' personal items should be labeled. Any lost and found items collected by staff will be kept until the end of camp for the summer.

2.2.2 – Food Restrictions

Due to the presence of individuals with severe food allergies, all campers are asked to refrain from bringing food to camp, including snacks, containing nuts or nut products. Your cooperation is vital in helping us maintain a safe and inclusive environment for everyone.

2.2.3 - Medications

If a camper takes any kind of medication, the medication and dosage will be indicated on the Camper Information Form and signed by a parent/guardian. Medications must not be dispensed without the completed and signed forms.

All medications must be kept in the original containers and specific directions for their use described on the forms. All medications will be given to the Camp Nurse or the Camp Manager upon check in. The Camp Nurse will supervise the distribution of any medication to a camper that must be taken during the camp day.

2.2.4 – Personal Electronic Devices

Cell phones are not to be used by campers unless approved by the camp staff or in an emergency. Cell phones interfere with the trust and bonding that should take place with peers and counselors at an overnight camp. Allow yourself to "unplug" from your electronics and situations with friends at home. Camper cellphones will be collected by staff on Sunday and returned on Friday. Parents, please communicate all arrangements with your child before camp begins. If campers would like to take pictures during their time at camp, they may bring a disposable or digital camera.

Other electronic gadgets not allowed at camp include, but are not limited to, laptops, iPads, iPods, MP3 players, CD players, Nintendo and other handheld systems. Wi-fi is not available at the campsite for camper use.

2.2.5 - Camp Attire

Our dress code is a reflection of both the inner and outer beauty of our campers. Specifics on clothing guidelines can be found in section [2.2.6 - Packing List](#). Please respect the dress code as a sign of camp unity and be mindful of dressing modestly.

Campers are encouraged to wear clothing that may get dirty during camp activities. All campers should wear closed-toed shoes to ensure their safety while at camp. Footwear must be worn at all times, including in the creek, on the hike, and on the climbing wall.

2.2.6 - Packing List

Clothes:

- 1 Nice outfit for fancy dinner & dance night
 - If wearing a skirt or dress, the shortest part of the hem must reach camper's fingertips, or extend past, when the camper's arms are at their sides
 - No mini-skirts, skimpy straps (less than the width of the camper's three fingers), or midriffs on display
- 1–2 Pairs long pants for cooler days. Leggings do not count as pants
- 1–2 Sweatshirts or sweaters. Mountain temperatures are cooler in the mornings & evenings, even during the summer
- 2–3 Pairs of shorts.
 - When arms are at camper's sides, shorts must reach their fingertips or extend past. No booty shorts
- 6 T-shirts
 - No racerbacks, crop tops, skimpy straps (less than the width of the camper's three fingers), low-cut necklines, or wide armholes
 - No underwear showing out of tops
- Modest one-piece bathing suit. If you do not own a one-piece bathing suit, plan to wear a t-shirt over your bathing suit
- Pajamas

- Tennis or hiking shoes. We recommend campers do not wear expensive gym shoes
- Underwear and socks for one week
- Visor or hat
- Water shoes with a heel strap (Chacos, Teva, etc.)

Other:

- 1 Bath towel
- 1 Swimming towel
- Day backpack
- Insect repellent in lotion or stick form*
- Medications taken regularly. Please bring in original prescription containers
- Pillow
- Reusable water bottle. Maintaining proper hydration is essential during hot summer days!
- Sleeping bag
- Sunscreen (at least SPF 30) in lotion or stick form*
- Toiletries: toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, comb, soap, etc.

*St. Thomas Catholic Camp staff will not apply sunscreen or insect repellent to campers but will supervise the application by the campers.

Optional:

- Bible or prayer journal
- Book for free time
- Cash to spend on snacks, treats, or additional t-shirts at the camp store
 - The average camper brings \$20 to spend at the camp store
 - Be advised: there is no ATM at camp
- Inexpensive digital camera or disposable camera.

- Pictures of other campers should only be taken with their permission.
Cameras that can access the internet are not allowed because photos can instantly be uploaded to social media or used without parental permission.

- Rosary
- Stationery and stamps to send letters
- Sunglasses
- Wristwatch (no cell phone clock)

What to leave behind:

- Breakable or valuable items
- Cellphones. Cellphones interfere with the trust and bonding that should take place with peers and counselors at an overnight camp. Allow yourself to "unplug" from your electronics and situations with friends at home. Parents, please communicate all arrangements with your child before camp begins.
- Electronic gadgets: laptops, iPads, iPods, MP3 players, CD players, Nintendo DS and other handheld systems. Wi-fi is unavailable at the campsite.
- Illegal substances and weapons (including pocketknives)
- Over-the-counter medication
- Snacks and other food with nuts

3.0 – Camper Policies and Procedures

3.1 - Arrival

Check-in is open between 2:00 PM and 3:30 PM on Sunday. Upon arrival, campers will be signed in by a parent or responsible adult, complete check-in with the Head Counselor and other appointed staff and then receive directions to their assigned cabins. During this time, staff will be assisting campers with name tags, engaging in outdoor games, or helping them get settled into their cabins.

Campers may not drive themselves to camp and must be dropped off by a parent or other responsible adult who is not attending camp.

Mass will be celebrated on Sunday evening for campers and staff, fulfilling the weekend obligation.

3.1.1 - Late Arrival

The Camp Manager, or appointed alternate supervisor, must authorize and approve in advance if a camper is late arriving to camp for any reason. Proper sign-in procedures must be followed any time a camper arrives late.

3.1.2 - Absences

If a camper has not arrived by 3:30 PM on Sunday, the Camp Manager will contact the family to request an update on the camper's expected arrival. For questions on refunds, see section [3.4 "Cancellation Notification and Fee"](#) (signed upon camp registration).

3.2 - Departure

Campers may be picked up between 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM on Friday. All campers must be signed out by a parent or responsible adult before leaving the campus.

Families are invited to attend Mass at approximately 11:00 AM, prior to departure. Following Mass, the campers and staff take a group photo and a light lunch will be provided for campers and their families to enjoy together.

3.2.1 - Written Notice Required

In the event of an early departure, a written note must be submitted in advance to the Camp Manager and kept on file. Written notes for early pickup must include the camper's full name, the effective date of the early departure, and the signature of an authorized parent or guardian. The Camp Manager, or appointed alternate supervisor, must authorize and approve in advance if a camper is picked up early from camp for any reason. Proper sign-out procedures must be followed any time a camper leaves early.

3.2.2 - Early Departure

The identity of the person picking up the camper must be verified against the written authorization before the camper is released. For any unexpected departure, a signed written note from a parent or guardian is still required. No exceptions will be made to this policy. Situations in which a camper may leave early include, but are not limited to:

- Leaving with a family member, relative, or friend not listed on the Camper Information Form
- Being picked up by someone other than the parent or guardian
- Unplanned or emergency departures initiated by the family

Additionally, any changes to parent or guardian contact information—including home, work, or emergency phone numbers; email address; camper pick-up details; or other relevant contact information—must be promptly reported to the Camp Manager. All records will be updated accordingly to ensure accurate and current documentation.

3.3 – Illness

Campers should not be brought to camp with an illness. If a camper is showing signs of illness, please keep them home. If a camper develops any concerning illness symptoms or has a temperature of 101 degrees or higher recorded at camp, parents will be required to pick up their child immediately. Depending upon the illness, a doctor's note stating that the camper may safely return to camp may be required.

3.4 - Cancellation Notification and Fee

You can cancel your registration. However, 50% of the registration fee per camper is nonrefundable. A prorated portion of the remaining fees may be refunded if the camper is sent home due to illness or injury. Refunds will not be made for the remaining period of three days or less. No refund will be given if a camper leaves early due to disciplinary

reasons, parent request, homesickness, dissatisfaction with camp experience, or there is no advanced notice of the cancellation to the Camp Manager.

3.5 - Camper Orientation

During the first few hours of camp, counselors must conduct a camper welcome session and orientation to review (introduce):

1. Staff names and positions
2. Camper names
3. Camp rules including but not limited to,
 - a. Camp boundaries and water safety rules
 - b. Expected behavior in all camp activities and areas of camp, including cabins, bathrooms, showers, mealtimes, recreation, lights out, and wake up calls, and with other campers and staff
 - c. Camper Calls Home
 - d. Camp Attire
 - e. Emergency procedures
 - f. Respect for wildlife and engagement practices

3.6 – Camp Boundaries and Restrictions

Camp counselors are required to ensure all campers stay within camp boundaries unless there is an organized activity approved by the Camp Manager and/or Head Counselor that would allow the campers to go outside the camp boundaries. If a camper is found to have violated this policy, the violation must be reviewed with the Camp Manager or Head Counselor to determine any action needed. Camp boundaries are defined as follows:

- North Boundary: Just before the climbing wall
- South Boundary: Ditch at the edge of the field
- East Boundary: Fence before US Highway 89

- West Boundary: 10 feet from the edge of Belt Creek

3.6.1 - Restrictions

- Climbing on the climbing wall is off limits for campers unless supervised by a camp counselor during an organized climbing event.
- The swinging bridge is off limits unless approved by a camp counselor.
- Providence House, the parking area east of Providence House, the Spider Shed, the Cobra shed, and the Cooks' trailer are off limits to all campers. The kitchen is also off limits to campers except during meals, clean up, and other times as approved by the Head Cook.

3.6.2 – Belt Creek Rules

Due to variable water conditions, including the potential for high runoff and flash flooding, Belt Creek presents inherent risks that require caution and adherence to established safety protocols.

For the safety of all participants, campers are strictly prohibited from swimming or wading in Belt Creek without the direct supervision of at least one lifeguard on staff and one other Camp Counselor. All individuals entering the water must wear appropriate footwear and remain within the designated swimming area at all times. These guidelines are in place to ensure a safe and responsible experience for all campers and staff.

3.7 – Bus Transportation

All campers are must adhere to safety rules during bus transportation for field trips:

- Only approach the bus if it has completely stopped
- Upon entering the bus, go directly to your seat
- Keep hands, head, and belongings inside the bus at all times
- Follow the instructions of the bus driver and staff at all times

3.8 – Camper Behavior and Code of Conduct

To ensure the safety and enjoyment of all campers, counselors are expected to kindly and firmly enforce the following behavior code of conduct for St. Thomas Catholic Camp participants:

- Show respect to fellow campers and staff.
- Follow directions from staff.
- Show respect to equipment, supplies and facilities.
- Refrain from use of inappropriate, abusive, or foul language.

3.8.1 - Zero Tolerance Guidelines

St. Thomas Catholic Camp is firmly committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all campers and staff. Bullying, harassment, or discrimination of any kind—whether based on race, religion, gender, ability, or any other characteristic—will not be tolerated under any circumstances. All campers and staff have the right to a secure and equitable camp experience, free from intimidation or harm.

Counselors, with the assistance of another staff member, are required to intervene immediately to address and stop any of the following behaviors:

- Verbal or physical aggression (e.g., hitting, punching, slapping, kicking, biting, licking, spitting, etc.)
- Attempting to flee or running away from staff supervision
- Ongoing disruptive behavior that interferes with camp activities
- Refusal to follow verbal or visual directions

Campers exhibiting any of these behaviors should be promptly separated from the group and counseled in a private setting with the Head Counselor and/or Camp Manager, depending on the severity of the incident. All behavioral incidents involving non-

compliance with these guidelines must be documented by camp staff. When appropriate, and at the discretion of the Camp Manager, parents or legal guardians will be contacted.

Repeated violations or actions that endanger the safety and well-being of campers or staff will be formally recorded and may result in temporary suspension or permanent dismissal from St. Thomas Catholic Camp. Discharge from camp will occur in a manner that prioritizes the emotional and physical safety of all campers. Any camper who, despite reasonable efforts to accommodate their individual needs, is unable to participate constructively in the camp environment or whose behavior is detrimental to the group may be dismissed from the program.

3.8.2 – Bullying

Bullying, defined here as the systematic and chronic infliction of physical harm or psychological distress upon one or more individuals, is prohibited at St. Thomas Catholic Camp. It includes, but is not limited to, any purposeful, unwanted written, verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior, such as threats, insults, or dehumanizing gestures, that may:

- Create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment
- Cause long-term emotional or physical harm
- Result in discomfort, humiliation, or exclusion
- Interfere unreasonably with a person's ability to participate in or benefit from camp activities
- Be characterized by a real or perceived imbalance of power
- Occur repeatedly over time

3.8.3 - Other Prohibited Behavior Include (but are not limited to):

- Unwanted teasing or name-calling
- Threatening or intimidating behavior
- Stalking, including cyberstalking

- Cyberbullying via social media, text, or other digital means
- Physical aggression or violence
- Theft or damage of property (camp-owned or personal)
- Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
- Public humiliation or mocking
- Social exclusion, coercion, or manipulation
- Spreading of rumors or falsehoods
- Bullying

All campers and staff are expected to uphold this policy in both conduct and communication. Any employee who witnesses or receives a report of bullying or related misconduct is required to report the incident promptly to the Camp Manager and Head Counselor for investigation and appropriate action. Disciplinary measures may be taken against any camper or staff member found in violation of this policy.

3.9 - Illegal Substances, Drugs, Tobacco, and Weapons

Alcohol, tobacco in any form, illegal drugs, vaping, any marijuana use and the possession of weapons during camp sessions are strictly forbidden and grounds for immediate removal from camp at the parent's expense.

3.10 - Approach to Discipline

Effective discipline at St. Thomas Catholic Camp serves three primary purposes:

1. To promote self-esteem, self-control, and personal responsibility
2. To discourage irresponsibility and inappropriate behavior
3. To ensure the safety and well-being of all campers and staff

For minor infractions, a staff member will verbally correct the inappropriate behavior.

For major infractions, St. Thomas Catholic Camp reserves the right, at the Camp Manager's

sole discretion, to call the parent/guardian of a camper and require the camper be picked up by the end of the day at the parent/guardian's expense. If absolutely necessary, campers will be separated from each other.

3.11 – Conflict Resolution

If a camper has a concern with another camper, they will first pray about the issue and then go to that person in a spirit of humility and love. If the campers are unable to resolve the issue, they will refer to the St. Thomas Catholic Camp Organizational Chart and ask the person at the next level of leadership in the organization to assist them in resolving the issue.

Camper > Cabin Counselor > Head Counselor > Camp Manager (Rachel Pankratz) > Camp Director (Lori Purpura)

3.12 - Communication

3.12.1 - Parents/guardians to Camp Manager

Parents/guardians are encouraged to communicate any questions, concerns, or relevant information about their camper with the Camp Manager or Head Counselor. All communication, including sensitive matters, will be handled confidentially and shared only with those who need to know.

If a camper is experiencing personal challenges or has a disability that may affect their participation in certain activities, this should be noted on the registration form and discussed with the Camp Manager upon arrival so that reasonable accommodations can be considered.

During the week, parents/guardians who need to contact their child should reach out to the Camp Manager or call the camp directly (Lodge Landline: [\(406\) 236-5548](tel:(406)236-5548)). Please note that campers and staff may be away from camp for activities and unable to respond immediately.

Parents/guardians must contact the Camp Manager regarding health concerns, camp procedures, camper medication, or any changes to authorized pick-up arrangements (see sections [3.2.1 - Written Notice Required](#) and [3.2.2 - Early Departure](#)). Camper behavior issues will also be communicated between the Camp Manager and parents/guardians.

The Camp Manager will respond to all calls or emails within twelve hours. In emergencies—defined as a serious injury to an immediate family member—or when urgent pick-up authorization is needed, the Camp Manager will respond as soon as possible.

3.12.2 – Campers and Home

Campers are generally not permitted to make phone calls during the camp session, except in the case of emergencies. However, to support campers experiencing homesickness, one call in the evening is permitted during a specified time. The time frame is established by the Head Counselor or Camp Manager. This limited phone access is intended to help minimize ongoing homesickness and encourage campers to remain fully immersed and present in the camp experience.

3.12.2 – Letters and Packages

Mail is handed out daily to campers just before mealtimes (not including lunch on Friday). You may send mail via a postal service, or you may bring it to camp when you drop off your camper.

Bring to camp: If you are dropping off your camper, it's a great idea to bring a letter or a package with you, and label them with your camper's name and the day you want them delivered. Our staff will receive them at the check-in table and deliver each letter/package on the appropriate day. Please refrain from sending nuts or items containing nut products (see section [2.2.2 - Food Restrictions](#)).

Postal Service: When sending letters or packages via a Postal Service expect an added day for delivery as we are in a rural area. We recommend mailing letters or postcards the day before your camper leaves for camp to account for possible delays.

Address:

(Camper Name)
St. Thomas Catholic Camp
4806 US HWY 89
Monarch, MT 59463

3.13 – Photos and Videos for Publicity

Throughout the camp season, photographers or videographers representing St. Thomas Catholic Camp, the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings or local newspapers may be visiting the camp to take pictures. The use of any photographs or video footage will be used strictly on a non-profit basis.

3.14 - Insurance

St. Thomas Catholic Camp does not provide individual accident or health insurance for staff or campers.

4.0 – Emergency Procedures

4.1 - General Emergency Protocol

In the event of any emergency, an alert will be signaled by three (3) loud blasts of an air horn. Upon hearing this signal, all activities must cease immediately. All campers, staff, and visitors are to report without delay to the designated assembly area, the large field between the lodge and the chapel. If this location is determined to be unsafe, the secondary

assembly point is near the cooks' trailer. Campers must line up promptly in their assigned dorm groups with their counselors and prepare for an immediate head count. To facilitate communication and ensure the safety of all individuals, everyone is expected to remain calm, quiet, and attentive to further instructions. Campers in distress should be offered appropriate support and reassurance. The Camp Manager, Head Counselor, or another designated staff member will provide additional directions and oversee any necessary evacuation procedures in an orderly and safe manner.

4.2 - Injured Person (Camper or Staff Member)

If a camper or staff member is injured, a second counselor must be contacted immediately to assist with the situation. Depending on the nature of the injury, do not attempt to move the individual, particularly in cases involving suspected fractures, or potential head, neck, or spinal injuries. If further assistance is required, dispatch two individuals to return to the main camp and alert additional staff members. The Camp Manager and Head Counselor must be notified as soon as possible to ensure appropriate medical response and coordination.

4.3 – Serious Accidents and Emergencies

All staff members are certified in both CPR and First Aid. In case of a major accident, injury, or health emergency, paramedics will be immediately notified by calling 911. In addition, every effort will be made by the Camp Manager or delegated supervisor to immediately contact parents/guardians. Staff will provide care for which they are trained until paramedics arrive and will reassure campers through maintaining a safe and calm environment.

Campers may not be released to anyone not listed on the Camper Information Form or whose name has not been received through written notification (See sections [3.2.1 - Written Notice Required](#) and [3.2.2 - Early Departure](#))

4.4 - Evacuation Plan: Fire or Flood

In the event of a fire or flooding, the emergency alert signal of three (3) loud air horn blasts will be issued. All activities must cease immediately. All campers, staff, and visitors are to proceed quickly to the large field between the lodge and chapel, unless directed otherwise due to unsafe conditions. The cleared area near the cooks' trailer serves as the secondary evacuation point. Campers must assemble in their dorm lines with their assigned counselors for a head count. It is imperative that all individuals remain calm, quiet, and responsive to instructions to ensure the safety and well-being of the entire camp community. Further evacuation directives will be communicated by the Camp Manager, Head Counselor, or other designated personnel, who will oversee the process and ensure an orderly and secure relocation as needed.

4.5 - Missing Person (Camper or Staff Member)

If a camper or staff member is reported missing, the emergency signal of three (3) loud blasts from an air horn will be sounded. All activities must stop immediately. All individuals must report to the designated assembly area, the large field between the lodge and chapel, or by the cooks' trailer if the primary location is unsafe. Campers are to assemble in their dorm lines with their counselors and prepare for a head count. As with all emergency situations, it is essential that campers remain quiet, calm, and attentive to instructions. The Camp Manager, Head Counselor, or designated staff member will lead the initial assessment and direct a coordinated search in accordance with established safety procedures.

4.6 – Wildlife Safety Guidelines

We are blessed to be surrounded by the beauty of God's creation, including the abundant wildlife of Montana. As faithful stewards, we are called to treat all creatures with care and respect. To protect both our campers and the natural world, wildlife should be observed from a safe distance, and the following guidelines must be followed at all times.

4.6.1 - General Wildlife Interaction

- **Maintain Distance:** Campers and staff are prohibited from approaching within 10 yards of any wildlife nests, burrows, or resting areas. This distance is essential to prevent disturbance to the animals and their habitats.
- **Avoid Disturbance:** Do not intentionally disturb wildlife. This includes refraining from actions that may cause stress or harm to animals.
- **Protect Young Wildlife:** All campers and staff must avoid approaching or interacting with young wildlife. Disturbing juvenile animals can have detrimental effects on their survival.

4.6.2 - Deer Encounters

- **Maintain Distance:** Keep a minimum of 25 yards between yourself and any deer encountered near the camp.
- **Non-Interference:** Do not chase, tease, or harass deer. Refrain from yelling, throwing objects, or attempting to feed them.
- **Behavioral Note:** While generally docile, deer may exhibit protective aggression if they feel threatened or if their young are at risk.

4.6.3 - Bear Encounters

- **Maintain Distance:** Keep at least 50 yards between yourself and any bear encountered.
- **Group Safety:** Stay within a close group and, if possible, move towards the nearest building.
- **Avoid Sudden Movements:** Do not run or make sudden movements. Maintain visual contact with the bear without direct eye contact, which may be perceived as a threat.

- **Report Encounter:** Immediately notify the Camp Manager and other campers and counselors of the encounter.
- **Local Authorities:** Contact the local game warden as soon as possible. For the Monarch, MT area, please reach out to:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks – Region 4

Phone: (406) 454-5840

Website: fwp.mt.gov

4.6.4 - Mountain Lion Encounters

- **Maintain Distance:** Keep at least 50 yards between yourself and any mountain lion encountered.
- **Group Safety:** Stay within a close group and calmly and slowly walk backwards towards the nearest building.
- **Defensive Posture:** If the mountain lion attempts to follow, try to make yourself appear larger by raising your arms or a jacket above your head.
- **Report Encounter:** Once safe, immediately notify the Camp Manager and other campers and counselors of the encounter.
- **Local Authorities:** Contact the local game warden as soon as possible. For the Monarch, MT area, please reach out to:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks – Region 4

Phone: (406) 454-5840

Website: fwp.mt.gov

4.6.5 - Emergency Contact Information

In the event of an emergency involving wildlife, please contact:

- **Emergency Services:** Dial 911
- **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks – Region 4:** (406) 454-5840

- **Camp Manager:** Rachel Pankratz – (406) 727-6683 Ext. 107

4.7 – Severe Weather Conditions

In the interest of safety for all campers, St. Thomas Catholic Camp staff will instruct all campers regarding safety procedures. Upon the recommendation of the Camp Manager and Head Counselor, in the event of heavy rain or excessive heat, staff will lead all campers to appropriate protective shelter. For the safety and well-being of all campers, staff is expected to err on the side of caution.

5.0 - Camp Contact Information

5.1 - Location Address

St. Thomas Catholic Camp
4806 US-89
Monarch, MT 59463

5.2 - Driving Directions

5.2.1 - From Great Falls

Head East from Great Falls on US 89 South to Armington Junction (approximately 23.5 miles).

Turn right at Armington Junction on US 89 South for 23.3 miles. Camp is located on the West side of the highway.

5.2.2 - From White Sulphur Springs

Head North from White Sulphur Springs on US 89 North (approximately 50.7 miles). Camp is located on the West side of the highway.

5.3 - Emergency Services: dial 911

- Cascade County Sheriff: 406-454-6820
- Fire (Monarch): 406-236-5385
- Ambulance (Belt): 406-277-3642
- Ambulance (White Sulphur Springs): 406-547-2400
- **Poison Control:** 1-800-222-1222
- Game Warden – Region 4 (North Central Montana)
 - Phone: 406-454-5840
 - Email: fwprg42@mt.gov
 - Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

5.4 - St. Thomas Catholic Camp Contacts

5.4.1 - Landline Phone Numbers

Lodge Landline: [\(406\) 236-5548](tel:(406)236-5548)

Property Manager Landline: [\(406\) 236-5385](tel:(406)236-5385)

Contact Debbie Hoxter via the Property Manager Landline with facility rental questions

5.4.2 - Camp Staff

Manager – Rachel Pankratz

Email: stthomascamp@diocesegfb.org

Phone: 406-727-6683 ext. 107

When camp is in session, calling the Lodge Landline [\(406-236-5548\)](tel:(406)236-5548) is the most reliable calling option for contacting Rachel

Great Falls-Billings Diocese Pastoral Center

406-727-6683