Diocese of Fresno Education Corporation
Waiver to Reopen
Tulare County
The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial

Background Information

Name of Applicant: Diocese of Fresno Education Corporation
The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial,

School Type:

☐ Traditional Public School

☐ Charter School

☒ Private, Independent, or Faith-Based School

Number of schools: 1 Enrollment: 157

Superintendent Name: Mona E. Faulkner

Principal Name: Sheila Rast

Address:

Diocese of Fresno Education Corporation - Mona E. Faulkner, Superintendent
1550 N. Fresno St.
Fresno, CA 93703

The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial - Sheila Rast, Principal
200 E. Race St.
Visalia, CA 93291

Grades Proposed to be Reopened:

☒ TK ☒ K ☒ 1st ☒ 2nd ☒ 3rd ☒ 4th ☒ 5th ☒ 6th

Date of Proposed Reopening: 9/14/2020

Name of Persons Completing Application: Mona E. Faulkner, Superintendent in consultation with Sheila Rast, Principal

Phone Number: Diocese Fresno Education Corporation, 559-488-7420
The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial: 559-732-5831

Email: Mona E. Faulkner, Superintendent: mfaulkner@dioceseoffresno.org
Sheila Rast, Principal: srast@csvgmc.org

Principal Signature: Sheila A. Rast Date: 8/17/20

Superintendent Signature: Mona E. Faulkner Mona Faulkner (Sep 16, 2020 13:15 PDT) Date: Sep 16, 2020

I. Consultation

Please confirm consultation with the following groups:

☐ Labor Organization(s)

Name of Organization(s) and Date(s) Consulted:

- If no labor organization represents staff at the school, please describe the process for consultation with school staff:

As of July 24th,100% of the teachers at The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial stated that they were ready to return to teaching face to face onsite. Also, in mid-July each staff member was given an Intent to Return Form (see attached). If the employee stated that he or she did not intend to return in person, the person contacted the Diocesan Health Officer in the HR department. The health officer determined what accommodations needed to be made, if any, for the employee to remain employed by the school.

☐ Parent and Community Organizations

Name of Organization(s) and Date(s) Consulted:

Parents were surveyed in late July and 70% indicated that they wanted their children to return in person to CSVGM. All plans for reopening were shared with the School Advisory Board as well.

II. Elementary School Reopening Plans-See Appendix A *Reopening Guidelines*

☒ **Cleaning and Disinfection:** How shared surfaces will be regularly cleaned and disinfected and how use of shared items will be minimized.

Sanitizing of each classroom with be completed every evening; including the use of foggers as well as approved sanitizer. Each student will have his or her own Chromebook or tablet in the classroom. No supplies will be provided by the school. Students will keep the same desk, in the same classroom throughout the day. The JK class will use individual small tables/lap desk tray in the classroom. School office installed plexiglass shields at the entrance. School office is wiped down after each person is served.

☒ **Cohorting:** How students will be kept in small, stable, groups with fixed membership that stay together for all activities (e.g., instruction, lunch, recess) and minimize/avoid contact with other groups or individuals who are not part of the cohort.

Each classroom of students will remain in one classroom, or at one area of the playground as well as a specific place at lunch. Students will eat together in their cohort outside and distanced if the outside temperature is below 90 degrees. Recess times will be staggered. Recess will include 6 feet of distancing outdoors. Hula Hoops have been purchased to help delineate space for the students when playing outside. Recess equipment has been purchased that can be sanitized after each use.

☒ **Entrance, Egress, and Movement Within the School:** How movement of students, staff, and parents will be managed to avoid close contact and/or mixing of cohorts.

Specific plans (see attached) have been provided to parents and guardians for drop off and pick up procedures. Staggered start and end times of the school day have been planned. Students will go directly to their parent's vehicle. Parents remain in the vehicle and do not transport any child/ren but their own. There are no plans for volunteers to be on campus. All meetings, including faculty and staff meetings will be through Zoom calls. Arrows have been placed on walkways helping the children remain as distant as possible going from classroom to outside or to parent pick up.

☒ **Face Coverings and Other Essential Protective Gear:** How CDPH's face covering requirements will be satisfied and enforced.

Face covers are required of all students, grades K-6 at all times while on campus except for lunch and recess. Faculty, staff and students are provided with disposable masks if they don't arrive wearing one. Employee taking staff members temperatures as they arrive at school will wear a mask, shield and gloves. Teachers will also be provided with shield with their mask for taking student temperatures.

☒ **Health Screenings for Students and Staff:** How students and staff will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 and how ill students or staff will be separated from others and sent home immediately.

Each staff member must fill out a questionnaire, (see attached) stating that he or she has not been in contact with anyone testing positive for the virus. Any symptom must be declared on that form and the employee is sent home and must be cleared by a physician before returning. If a child displays any symptoms related to the virus or is in any way unwell, the child is isolated in a separate room and the parents are called to pick up the child immediately. The child cannot return until cleared by a physician.

☒ **Healthy Hygiene Practices:** The availability of handwashing stations and hand sanitizer, and how their use will be promoted and incorporated into routines.

The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial has bottled water at the school. Each student fills his or her water bottle to drink during the day. The water stations are disinfected after every use. Drinking fountains have been removed and water stations have been installed. Hand sanitizer is positioned at every entrance and in the school office and in each classroom. Students will be taught the proper way to wash hands and the area will be sanitized after every use. Signage on the proper way to wash hands is in each classroom and in each restroom.

☒ **Identification and Tracing of Contacts:** Actions that staff will take when there is a confirmed case. Confirm that the school(s) have designated staff persons to support contact tracing, such as creation and submission of lists of exposed students and staff to the local health department and notification of exposed persons. Each school must designate a person for the local health department to contact about COVID-19.

The principal will Immediately notify local health officials. These officials will help administrators determine a course of action for their childcare programs or schools. Principal will immediately notify the Office of Catholic Education (OCE) and work with the OCE to determine what communication should be sent out the school community. The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial will work with the local health officials to determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.

☒ **Physical Distancing:** How space and routines will be arranged to allow for physical distancing of students and staff.

Tape and markers will indicate the 6 feet of distance that must be maintained in the office and waiting in lines. All desks have been arranged in each classroom observing the 6 feet of social distancing. Staff members observe distancing in all shared spaces such as teacher work rooms and in hallways. Staff members use a sign-up form with designated times to work in the work room. If teachers need to speak to one another; they should be outside and 6 feet apart rather than going into each other's classrooms. No small group tables are used in the classroom. Groupings are done by physically moving desks. Groupings are also done using the Zoom breakout rooms on the Chrome books. No shared desks are ever used.

☒ **Staff Training and Family Education:** How staff will be trained, and families will be educated on the application and enforcement of the plan.

All staff members are trained prior to the opening of school. The Office of Education provided all schools with a training PowerPoint presentation (see attached) that was required of all employees. Parents also signed an agreement stating that they accept and agree to comply with all safety measures taken by the school, (see attached).

☒ **Testing of Students and Staff:** How school officials will ensure that students and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 will be rapidly tested and what instructions they will be given while waiting for test results. Describe how staff will be tested periodically to detect asymptomatic infections.

Any student or staff member who has any symptoms of the virus or reports that they have been exposed will be sent home immediately or if notified by phone, will not be allowed to come on campus until the results of a COVID test are complete. An employee shares his or her results with the Diocesan Health Officer and then the principal is notified if the employee is safe to return. Parents must have a letter from a qualified physician stating that the child is safe to return to school. That letter must be shared with the school principal before the child is allowed back to school. Staff are tested periodically by their primary care provider or by referring teachers to a community testing site, as testing capacity permits and as practicable. Examples of recommended frequency include all staff being tested over 2 months, where 25% of staff are tested every 2 weeks, or 50% every month to rotate which staff members are tested over time. Under the CARES Act, Covid-19 testing is covered by the Diocesan Health Plan with no cost to the individual being tested.

TheCovid-19 testing sites in Visalia include:

The Kaweah Delta Medical Center located on 400 W. Mineral King Avenue
CVS located at 1102 N. Demaree Street
Maj Medical Clinic located at 5109 W. Goshen Avenue.

☒ **Triggers for Switching to Distance Learning:** The criteria the superintendent will use to determine when to physically close the school and prohibit in-person instruction.

The Office of Catholic Education will close The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial if 25% or more of the Catholic schools in Tulare County have closed due to COVID-19 within 14 days, and in consultation with the local public health department. The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial may typically reopen after 14 days, in consultation with the local public health department provided a though cleaning and disinfection regimen has been completed. Public health has been consulted and done their investigation of the outbreak. The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial's Distance Learning Handbook (see attached) states that our goal is to return to campus learning as soon as possible, however students are also given the option to continue distance learning for the duration of the school year.

☒ **Communication Plans:** How the superintendent will communicate with students, staff, and parents about cases and exposures at the school, consistent with privacy requirements such as FERPA and HIPAA.

The Superintendent will send a letter to all parents explaining the cases and exposure without releasing any names (see attached). The school communicates with parents extensively using the FACTS SIS student system. The school has the capability of either texting parents or emailing parents Important information.

Additional Comments:

The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial community feels that this uncertain time has caused much anxiety in people's lives. They feel that our children NEED to be together through the Catholic education school system to lift each other up, interact, worship together and grow in so many ways. It is well known that in some children's lives their stability comes from school and this has been taken away from them. Distance learning cannot replace the social and emotional growth and experiences that our school provides. This is a challenging time, but the school has prepared well for the safety and well-being of our students, faculty and staff at a time when we can return to school.

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Addendum

Identification and Tracing of Contacts: Actions that staff will take when there is a confirmed case. Confirm that the school(s) have designated staff persons to support contact tracing, such as creation and submission of lists of exposed students and staff to the local health department and notification of exposed persons. Each school must designate a person for the local health department to contact about COVID-19.

The school principal and the school office manager will be responsible for the identification and contact tracing process. The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial will use the symptomatic employee and student checklist to ensure close contacts are easily identified and promptly notified. (see attached). The principal will notify local health officials (Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency) and the Office of Catholic Education and will use the communication template provided by the Diocese of Fresno Office of Catholic Education to notify all close contacts while maintaining confidentiality as required by state and federal laws. The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial will work with the local health officials (Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency) to determine appropriate next steps including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.

Communication Plans: How the superintendent will communicate with students, staff, and parents about cases and exposures at the school, consistent with privacy requirements such as FERPA and HIPPA.

The Superintendent will send a letter to all parents explaining the cases and exposure without releasing any names. (Attached in the original waiver). In case of an emergency, The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial administration and faculty have many ways to reach our parents and guardians very quickly. We are a small school with 113 families who have a TK-6th grade child enrolled and we are in close contact frequently. The Principal and faculty are able to email, send a text alert through our FACTS SIS (Student Information System) or broadcast a telephone message within a matter of seconds. We also have a strong social media platform and information is released quickly through Facebook- https://www.facebook.com/catholicschoolofvisalia.georgemccannmemorialcampus.org/ and through the GMC TODAY newsletter. In the event of a COVID case on campus, all individuals' names will be confidential in communications. All protocols listed on the Diocese Re-Opening Guidelines document and the CDC guidelines will be followed. The Re-Opening Guidelines for school and the preschool may be found on the school's website- https://www.catholicschoolvisalia.org. The Re-Opening Guidelines for pre-school and TK-6th grades have been shared with parents along with an informational letter and zoom meeting on the facility reorganization, social distancing in and outside of the classroom, PPE requirements and cleaning and sanitizing procedures.

Additional Comments:
The Catholic School of Visalia, George McCann Memorial continues to prepare for re-opening. Protective shield barriers have been installed in the front office to protect office staff and minimize their contact with parents and office visitors. An isolated sick room has been disinfected in the event of a sick child. Cones and markings designate playground zones for students to play during recess. PPE's, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray and wipes, single use masks, gloves and shields are on hand in every classroom for teacher use.

The school facility has been reorganized for social distance learning. Our classrooms are large and can accommodate 17 student desks in a room, 6 feet apart. In the case of a larger class, we have utilized the library and science lab to split the classes into two groups with 12-15 students in a group maintaining 6 ft apart. We have a large field which can be divided into two separate play areas and the playground area is large enough to be divided into two separate play areas as well. The outdoor picnic tables on the field and under the arbor may be used for classes and there is plenty of space to keep students 6 feet apart.

Our school is tuition-based, and distance learning poses a financial hardship on our parents who must go to work and now they have pay for childcare in addition to tuition. Also, parents and faculty have expressed deep concern for our students social and emotional well-being. Last Spring, we had several months to be together and make solid relationships. Now we are starting over. Students have a different teacher, some of their friends have had to leave our school due to financial constraints, while other students, new to George McCann have enrolled and joined our school family. It is difficult to make strong personal connections through a Zoom meeting. This is not easy for parents either, even the parent who are stay at home or working at home with their students. We have families with multiple students at home and they are trying to meet all their needs.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Final Audit Report 2020-09-16

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