

# What is Smile Squad?

Important information to support the program at your school



## What is Smile Squad?

Smile Squad is the Victorian Government's **free** school dental program.

Smile Squad offers:

- **free** oral health promotion
- **free** annual oral health examinations, and
- **free** follow-up treatment

to all Victorian government school students.

Regular dental checks can prevent or address dental health issues before they become serious. Many students do not see a dentist regularly and have poor oral health.

### Oral health promotion

Each student will receive a free oral health pack that includes:

- a toothbrush
- toothpaste
- oral health education brochure.

Schools will also have access to the Smile Squad oral health promotion guide, [A guide to supporting good oral health in schools](#). This document offers helpful, opt-in ideas for schools to support and encourage healthy environments and behaviours.

### Annual oral health examination

Each school will be visited by Smile Squad who will provide a free oral health check-up to each student.

- **Services provided:** examination, x-rays when required, oral health and dietary advice, coaching, and preventive interventions, including application of fluoride varnish.
- Oral health examinations will usually be delivered in a room on the school site using mobile dental equipment (i.e. portable chair, portable examination tools).
- Two dental chairs will operate at the same time, increasing to four during dental student placements.
- The team will comprise one oral health or dental therapist and one dental assistant per chair.

- The oral health examination appointment will be approximately 15 minutes long.

### Follow-up treatment

Free follow-up treatment will be provided to all students who need it.

- **Services provided:** scale and clean, fissure sealants, restorations (fillings), extractions, root canals, and all other general treatment required.

### Does not include orthodontics or cosmetic procedures.

- Treatment usually takes place in a van on the school site or at the community dental agency clinic.
- The treatment van has a fully functioning single-chair dental clinic set up.
- The treatment van will be staffed by oral health therapists, dental therapists, dental assistants and/or dentists.
- More complex treatments may need to occur at the local Smile Squad community dental clinic.

All services are provided free of charge. **There are no out-of-pocket costs for parents/carers.**



Smile Squad is led by the Department of Health (DH) and Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV), with support from the Department of Education and Training (DET). Smile Squad services are provided by community dental agencies.

# How does the program work in your school?

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## What is the process?



### 1. Delivery of Smile Squad oral health packs

Smile Squad contacts your school to arrange delivery of oral health packs for all students.



### 2. Scheduling clinical services

When Smile Squad is ready to arrange a visit to your school, your local community dental agency will contact you to schedule dates for oral health examinations and discuss any program requirements.



### 3. Site visit

A site visit will occur prior to the service being delivered at your school. You will need to provide a room for oral health examinations, as well as a flat surface, electricity and water for a treatment van. Appropriate site to be agreed between your school and Smile Squad.



### 4. Examination consent processes

Your school to share electronic consent form link with students, parents and carers via appropriate communication channel (provided by Smile Squad with supporting communication material). Paper consent forms will be provided to those parents/carers who prefer them.



### 5. Oral health examinations at school

Smile Squad visits your school to provide examinations. Smile Squad and your school to schedule a return visit to provide follow-up treatment..



### 6. Treatment consent processes

Parents and carers will be contacted by Smile Squad and asked to provide verbal consent for students requiring follow-up treatment. This enables clinicians and parents to discuss treatment options, including risks and benefits. Mature minors (secondary school aged students only) may be able to consent for themselves.



### 7. Treatment van visits school (may occur concurrently with the oral health examinations)

Treatment van is set up on school grounds to provide treatment to students requiring it.

**Questions or concerns:** If schools or parents/carers have any questions or concerns, they will be provided with contact details for their local Smile Squad team to speak with someone directly.

# Quality of care

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## Quality and safety standards

All Smile Squad services adhere to the highest safety and quality requirements. Smile Squad is managed by Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV), the lead oral health agency in Victoria. Community dental agencies will be providing school dental program services under the name 'Smile Squad'.

Smile Squad is accredited to all relevant National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards.

## Continuity of care

Smile Squad is the Victorian government's only school dental program, offering free end-to-end care for all government schools. It provides examinations and follow-up treatment, completely free of charge, for all students.

This ensures that students get all the care they need, including early interventions to prevent further problems.

To make follow-up treatments as easy as possible for schools and families, the Smile Squad team schedules follow-up appointments, and obtains all necessary consent.

Follow-up treatments are provided onsite at your school, in purpose built Smile Squad dental treatment vans, or at the community dental clinic.

## Students with additional needs

Dental and oral health therapists are trained in providing services to children who may have additional support needs. These needs may include physical or intellectual disability, sensory processing difficulties, mental health issues or a history of trauma.

Smile Squad staff will work with the school and caregivers to understand each individual student and ensure care is tailored to support their needs. Smile Squad can arrange an interpreter if

required by a student, or an adult accompanying the student.

## Meet the Smile Squad

Smile Squad staff are equipped with years of education and the necessary qualifications to provide a wide range of dental care in a variety of settings (including schools). The Smile Squad workforce is comprised of:

### Dental assistants

Dental assistants support dental therapists, oral health therapists and dentists during examinations and treatment. They also carry out a variety of administrative tasks and help prepare students for their examination or treatment.

### Dental therapists (DTs) and oral health therapists (OHTs)

DTs and OHTs are both trained to provide the oral health examinations and many of the follow-up treatments included in Smile Squad. They provide oral health assessment, diagnosis, treatment, management and preventive services for children and adolescents. They work collaboratively with all members of the dental team, including dentists. OHTs have an additional qualification in dental hygiene and can carry out tasks such as complex scaling and cleaning teeth.

### Dentists

Dentists specialise in the treatment of conditions affecting the mouth, teeth, jaws and gums. They provide assessment, diagnosis, treatment, management and preventive services. Dentists and specialists will provide more complex treatment such as root canals or complex extractions, as required.

In addition, Bachelor of Oral Health students may provide some services under the full supervision of appropriately qualified OHTs or DTs.

All Smile Squad clinicians are registered with the Australian Health Practitioners Registration Association (AHPRA).

# Safety and duty of care

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## Student safety and wellbeing

The Department of Education and Training (DET) has worked closely with the Department of Health (DH) and Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) to ensure the service provided in your school meets a range of quality and safety considerations through their incorporation into the program model.

DHSV ensures all service providers:

- perform services in a skilful, efficient and courteous manner
- comply with relevant school wellbeing and safety policies and protocols, as provided to them by your school
- have undertaken a satisfactory Working with Children Check (WWCC) prior to entering school premises
- do not share any confidential information, unless compelled to do so by law
- only examine and treat students where consent has been received by the student's parent/carer, or by the student if they are considered a mature minor (secondary school aged students only)
- are appropriately qualified and have the requisite knowledge, skill and expertise to provide Smile Squad services.

## What does this mean for your school?

While your school will still have to consider standard duty of care processes, DET has worked closely with DH and DHSV to ensure all Smile Squad providers meet the necessary legal and safety requirements. This means your school:

- **does NOT** have to enter into a **licence agreement** each time Smile Squad visits your school
- **does NOT** have to **check relevant documentation** (licences, registrations and insurance) each time Smile Squad visits your school.

## Supervision

Supervision may be required for students when they are travelling to and from their dental appointment on the school site, depending on:

- where in the school the Smile Squad is delivering services
- the age and maturity of the students receiving services

- individual student needs, including health, disability or behavioural needs

Schools **will NOT be required to supervise students during their appointment** with Smile Squad.

Smile Squad will:

- discuss your school's supervision requirements prior to commencement of the program, based on the needs of your students
- discuss several options with you, including:
  - supervision by a Smile Squad staff member
  - supervision by a school staff member (where possible)
  - an alternative agreed option.

## Patient identification

Smile Squad will also discuss and agree on a process for identifying students and transporting them between the classroom and the Smile Squad clinic.

## Consent process

Smile Squad will:

- provide your school with a link to the electronic consent form for you to distribute to students/families four weeks prior to the program commencing. Paper forms will be available on request, as required by your school community
- ensure that, for students requiring treatment, a clinician will discuss options with parents/carers, explaining risks and benefits. Mature minors (secondary school aged students only) may be able to consent for themselves
- gain verbal consent (likely via telephone) from parents/carers/mature minors for any treatment to occur at school
- provide you with a list of students with consent for any required treatment to occur at school.

We would ask the school to:

- circulate any required paper consent forms
- send reminders to parents/carers/mature minors to maximise student participation

Refer to the Department of Education and Training's [Dental Services policy](#) for guidance on Smile Squad consent requirements.

# Preparing for Smile Squad

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Before Smile Squad arrives at your school, there are some key considerations that can help your school get prepared. Actions where schools will need to work closely with Smile Squad during the process are highlighted in **orange**.

<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smile Squad (through community dental agencies) will contact your school to invite you to participate and discuss program requirements. They will arrange a delivery of free oral health packs to be sent to your school for distribution to students.</li> </ul>
<b>Dates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smile Squad will work with your school to identify, discuss and confirm dates for the delivery of Smile Squad at your school.</li> </ul>
<b>Space and site requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smile Squad will work with you to consider <u>where</u> in the school the <b>examinations</b> can take place (ideally a room with electricity and a sink). Alternatives to a room will be discussed with you.</li> <li>Smile Squad will work with you to consider options for <u>where</u> the <b>treatment</b> van can be safely located on the school site.</li> </ul>
<b>Site assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smile Squad will conduct a site assessment with a nominated school representative prior to the program commencing, to identify any minor remedial work that may need to occur (e.g. installation of a power point). Smile Squad will cover these costs.</li> <li>Please work with Smile Squad to agree on sites at time of visit.</li> </ul>
<b>School policies and procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide relevant school-level policies and procedures to Smile Squad (e.g. health and wellbeing, safety, key contacts, emergency procedures).</li> </ul>
<b>Supervision requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smile Squad will work with your school to ensure supervision requirements are met.</li> <li>Smile Squad will discuss and agree on a process for identifying students and transporting them between the classroom and the Smile Squad clinic.</li> </ul>
<b>Consent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smile Squad will provide you with a link to the electronic consent form. Paper copies will be available on request as required by your school community. Translated reference versions of the consent form are available on the <a href="#">Smile Squad website</a>.</li> <li>Share electronic consent form link with students and families, ideally four weeks prior to the commencement of the program.</li> <li>Return any completed paper consent forms to Smile Squad prior to the program commencing, in the Express Post envelopes provided.</li> <li>Smile Squad will gain verbal consent for any required treatment.</li> </ul>
<b>Promotion to school community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smile Squad will provide you with posters and electronic brochures prior to the program commencing.</li> <li>Use the Smile Squad oral health promotion guide, <a href="#">A guide to supporting good oral health in schools</a>. This document provides friendly, helpful, opt-in ideas for you to support and encourage healthy environments and behaviours.</li> <li>Now you can start promoting Smile Squad to your whole school community!</li> </ul>

Refer to the Department of Education and Training's [Dental Services policy](#) for more information on implementing Smile Squad in your school.