

What is Smile Squad?

Important information to support the program at your school



What is Smile Squad?

Smile Squad is the Victorian Government's school dental program which will provide free dental care to all Victorian primary and secondary government school students.

This initiative is being led by the Department of Health (DH) and Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV), with input from the Department of Education and Training (DET) to design and implement this important initiative in the school environment.

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 dental health.

What does Smile Squad include?

All services below will be available free of charge to all Victorian government school students.

Annual oral health examination

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

- **Includes:** examination, x-rays when required, oral health and dietary advice, coaching and preventive interventions, including application of fluoride varnish.

Follow-up treatment

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

- **Includes:** scale and clean, fissure sealants, root canals, restorations (fillings), extractions, and impressions for mouth guards (i.e. all non-cosmetic treatments).

Does not include orthodontics or cosmetic procedures.

Oral health promotion

Each student will receive a free dental pack.

- Includes: a toothbrush, toothpaste and oral health education material. Oral health promotion will link with existing school-based programs where possible.

Oral health examination

- 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)
- The team will comprise two oral health or dental therapists and two dental assistants.
- The oral health examination appointment will be approximately 15 minutes long.

Providing this service in a room in the school will mean more students can be seen at one time, cutting down the total length of time the service may be required on the school site.

Follow-up treatment

- Will take place in a van on the school site.
- The treatment van will have 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 (including root canal treatment, complex restorations and complex or surgical extractions) may need to occur at the local community dental agency.



How does the program work in your school?

Important information for your school



What is the process?



1. Initial engagement:

Smile Squad (through community dental agency) and school to schedule dates for oral health examinations and discuss any program requirements.



2. Site visit:

A site visit will occur prior to the service being delivered on the school site. Schools will need to provide a room for the oral health examinations, as well as a flat surface, electricity and water for treatment van.



3. Examination consent processes:

School to hand out and collect consent forms (provided by Smile Squad).



4. Oral health examinations at school:

Smile Squad visits school. Scheduling for treatment is organised.



5. Treatment consent processes:

Parents will be contacted by Smile Squad and asked to provide verbal consent for students requiring follow up treatment. This means treatment options, including risks and benefits can be discussed with parents.



6. Treatment van visits school (may occur concurrently with the oral health check-ups)

Treatment van is set up on school grounds.

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

Complaints can be escalated to Department of Health if necessary: smilesquad@health.vic.gov.au.

Quality of care

Important information for your school



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), who are 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.

In addition, to ensure all services are COVID-safe, enhanced infection control measures will be in place in all Smile Squad services. For details see "Information for schools" at www.smilesquad.vic.gov.au.

Continuity of care

Smile Squad is the Victorian government's only school dental program offering free end-to-end care for all public primary and secondary schools. It provides examinations as well as all necessary follow-up treatments (excluding cosmetics), completely free of charge for all students.

This ensures that students get all the care they require, 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 consents.

Where possible, follow-up treatments are provided onsite at your school, in the specially-designed Smile Squad dental treatment vans. This makes it easier for families and students who might find it difficult to get to a dentist.

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 issues, mental health issues or past trauma.

Smile Squad staff will work with the school and caregivers to understand each child's issues and

ensure care is tailored to support their needs. If a student, or an adult who is accompanying the student, requires an interpreter, Smile Squad staff can arrange this at no cost to the student or the school.

Meet the Smile Squad

All 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 (DAs)

Dental assistants assist dental therapists, oral health therapists and dentists chair-side during procedures. 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 the Smile Squad program. 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 will provide more complex treatment (e.g. root canals).

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

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

Safety and duty of care

Important information to support the program at your school



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.

To ensure all services are COVID-safe, enhanced infection control measures will be in place in all Smile Squad services. In addition, 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 child's parent/guardian
- ✓ 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 DHHS and DHSV to manage some key considerations when engaging with an external provider. This means your school:

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

Additionally, DET has worked closely with DHHS and DHSV to incorporate **supervision** and **consent** processes into the program model.

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. 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.

Consent processes

Students can only participate if parental consent is received for both the oral health examination and any required treatment.

Smile Squad will:

- provide consent packs to your school for you to distribute to students prior to the program commencing
- provide a copy of the signed consent form to your school to keep with the student's records
- ensure that, for students requiring treatment, a clinician will discuss options with parents/guardians, explaining risks and benefits.
- gain verbal consent from parents/guardians for any treatment to occur at school (likely via telephone).
- provide you with a list of students whose parents have confirmed their consent for any required treatment to occur at school.

We would ask the school to:

- circulate consent forms and reminders in any way(s) that will maximise student participation
- if necessary, follow up directly with carers or guardians of children in out-of-home care to obtain consent.

Preparing for Smile Squad

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A handy checklist to help you prepare!

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 are highlighted in **orange**.

Engagement

- Smile Squad will contact your school to invite you to participate and explain the program.

Dates

- Identify, discuss and confirm key dates to deliver Smile Squad at your school.

Space and site requirements

- Consider where in the school the **examinations** can take place (ideally a room with electricity and a sink). Alternatives to a room will be discussed with you.
- Consider options for where the **treatment** van can be safely located on the school site.

Site assessment

- A site assessment will be conducted prior to the program commencing, to identify any minor remedial work that may need to occur (e.g. installation of a power point).

School policies and procedures

- Provide relevant school-level policies and procedures to Smile Squad (e.g. health and wellbeing, safety, key contacts, emergency procedures).

Supervision requirements

- Smile Squad will work with your school to ensure any supervision requirements are met.

Consent

- Smile Squad will provide you with consent packs.
- Schools will need to distribute the packs to all students, ideally six weeks prior to the commencement of the program.
- Return all completed consent forms to Smile Squad prior to the program commencing, in the Express Post envelopes provided.
- Smile Squad will gain verbal consent for any required treatment and provide you with a list of student names.

Promotion to school community

- Smile Squad will provide you with posters and electronic brochures prior to the program commencing.
- Now you can start promoting Smile Squad to your whole school community!