

# Smile Squad information sheet

Everyone deserves a healthy smile.

Tooth decay is the most common childhood disease in Australia, but it can be prevented. Regular dental check-ups can find and manage problems early.

## Dental services

Smile Squad provides free dental services to students at school during school hours. This includes any general treatment that is needed.

Smile Squad staff include oral health therapists, dental therapists, oral health educators, dental assistants, and dentists.

### Do I need to pay anything?

No. This is a free service for all students, provided by the Victorian Government.

### What happens at the examination (check-up)?

A full dental examination includes a check of a student's teeth, gums, jaw and the mouth.

If you give consent, the following services might be provided:

Service	Description
Tooth cleaning	A clean of the teeth to remove calculus (hard plaque) or tough stains
Dental x-rays	X-rays (usually one for each side of the mouth) help to see what is happening under the gums and inside the teeth
Fluoride varnish	Fluoride varnish is painted onto all teeth every six months to help prevent tooth decay
Fissure sealants	A coating painted onto molar teeth to help prevent tooth decay. Some fissure sealant materials contain fluoride

If extra treatment is needed, Smile Squad will discuss this and seek consent.

Smile Squad will only provide preventive services that will benefit a student.

### Who can provide consent?

Parents, legal guardians, carers or mature minors may complete these forms and provide consent for examination.

Whilst the engagement of parents/guardians is encouraged, in Victoria, children who are considered 'mature minors' may provide consent for their own dental care. The law recognises that as children become older and more mature, they are more capable of making their own decisions, including seeking and obtaining their own health care.

To be considered a mature minor, the Smile Squad clinician must be satisfied that the student has sufficient understanding of the risks, benefits, and possible complications of their condition and proposed treatment to give informed consent. A student may be considered capable of making some dental treatment decisions but not others. Where a secondary school aged student isn't considered to be a mature minor by the dental clinician, they will seek parent/guardian consent.

If you have any questions, please speak with your Smile Squad provider.

### Do parents, legal guardians or carers have to attend a student's appointment?

Parents, legal guardians, or carers are welcome to attend if they want to, but this is not a requirement.

If more treatment is needed, we might ask a parent, legal guardian, or carer to come to the appointment.

### What if a student has had dental treatment recently?

If a student has had a recent dental visit they can be seen again by Smile Squad. They may not need x-rays and other preventive services.

Smile Squad can become a student's regular dental provider. We will visit your school every year - more often for those students who need it.

### What if a student is away from school during the Smile Squad visit?

If a student is away from school, we will see them another day or they can visit us at their local community dental agency.

Find your nearest community dental clinic at: <https://www.dhsv.org.au/our-services/find-dental-clinics/clinic-search>

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## Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS)

### What is the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS)?

The Australian Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) is a dental benefits program that provides eligible 0–17-year-olds basic dental care over a two-year period.

Smile Squad will use CDBS for eligible students.

We will make a claim on your behalf for CDBS if you sign the consent form in this pack.

### What if a student is not eligible for CDBS or Medicare?

Every student will still receive free dental care. All students in government schools are eligible to see Smile Squad. There are no out-of-pocket costs.

## Privacy

Smile Squad is a Victorian Government program. Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) is delivering this program in partnership with community dental agencies.

Smile Squad will protect your privacy. They will keep your personal and health information confidential and secure. Smile Squad will store, maintain, and use this information so it meets high standards set by the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Health Records Act 2001*.

We respect these laws and guidelines. They tell us when and how to collect, use, handle and destroy all personal and health information.

Smile Squad will only collect personal and health information that is necessary. Smile Squad may need to collect extra information during visits. We do this to come up with the best care plan possible.

We will collect information and store it in a student's dental record. Authorised Smile Squad personnel (from DHSV and Victorian community dental agencies) have access to this.

We will primarily use and share a student's personal and health information to:

- determine a student's dental needs, and
- provide dental care and treatment to them.

At certain times we will collect data and feedback for Smile Squad evaluation purposes and to improve our services. We will keep your identity anonymous for this.

We will remove any identifying information. We will need to share anonymised information between government agencies like DHSV, Department of Education and Training, and Department of Health. We will do this so we can learn together about the oral health of all students at school in Victoria.

Smile Squad may use or disclose a student's health information, in other circumstances, if required or permitted by law.

You may access your dental record by contacting Smile Squad. In some cases, the Freedom of Information (FOI) process may be appropriate. A copy of the DHSV privacy statement is available on the DHSV website at: <https://www.dhsv.org.au/privacy>

In some circumstances, Smile Squad may share information with a student's school if this is necessary to support their safety, health, and wellbeing. Information about a student that the school collects or receives in connection with the Smile Squad program will be used and managed in accordance with the school's privacy policy, available from the school.

A student's school may also share information that the school already has with Smile Squad if this is needed to support a student's safety, health, and wellbeing during their appointment.

## Rights and responsibilities

A copy of your healthcare rights is available on the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care website.

## Feedback

Please tell us what you think (good or bad), at any time. You can email feedback to [smilesquad@dhsv.org.au](mailto:smilesquad@dhsv.org.au)

# What do these dental services mean?

Smile Squad will only provide services if a student will benefit from them.

## Dental examination (check-up)

A dental check-up includes a check of teeth, gums, jaw and the mouth.

**Benefits:** Check-ups are the best way to find problems early. Once we know what is happening, we can plan for follow-up care or treatment.

**Without a check-up:** We cannot identify problems. If untreated, problems could get worse.

**Risks:** There are no likely risks.

## X-rays of teeth

An x-ray machine uses radiation to create a picture of what is happening inside the body.

We take x-rays of teeth using a small film put inside the mouth. We usually take two x-rays - one for each side, but sometimes we might take more to look at an area more closely.

**Benefits:** Dental x-rays give us information about teeth that cannot be seen by the naked eye. X-rays can find decay, infection, or problems with adult teeth under baby teeth. This helps us to plan treatment.

**Without an x-ray:** We may miss finding problems that could be fixed if we knew about them.

**Risks:** Dental x-rays are very safe. The x-rays we normally take have lower radiation than an aeroplane flight.

## Fluoride varnish application

Fluoride varnish is a preventive treatment.

Painting fluoride varnish onto teeth is very easy and usually takes a few minutes. We paint the varnish onto teeth with a small brush or cotton bud. The varnish can stick to the teeth for hours. You can see the fluoride varnish on the teeth, until it dissolves away.

Fluoride varnish works best if applied at least twice a year. If needed, we will return in six months to check in on a student's oral health and apply fluoride varnish.

**Benefits:** Fluoride is a common mineral that helps build strong teeth and prevent tooth decay. Fluoride varnish can stop decay from starting. It can also slow the rate at which decay happens. Using fluoride varnish can prevent tooth decay in the future.

**If we don't use fluoride varnish:** Teeth may be more likely to get decay and need treatment such as fillings in the future.

**Risks:** Although rare, some people are allergic to an ingredient in fluoride varnish. **Students with an allergy to band-aids, rosin, colophony or milk protein (casein) may not be able to have fluoride varnish applied. Students with severe asthma should also avoid fluoride varnish.**

## Fissure sealants

Sealants are a special coating painted onto grooves (fissures) in teeth.

Sealants are usually placed in the grooves of permanent molar teeth. To apply the sealant, we clean the tooth surface and keep it dry until the sealant has set.

**Benefits:** Sealants cover the grooves of teeth and stop food and germs from getting stuck. This stops decay from starting in the grooves.

Some sealant materials contain fluoride. We can use this on teeth with small decay to stop the decay from getting bigger.

**Without fissure sealants:** Decay can happen in the grooves of the teeth. This may mean fillings are needed later. Decay is more likely to happen when students cannot clean their teeth very well and have sugar-sweetened drinks and foods.

**Risks:** In rare cases some people may have an allergy to the fissure sealant material.

## Tooth cleaning

Teeth may need extra cleaning when toothbrushing cannot remove calculus (hard plaque) or tough stains.

We can remove calculus with vibrating instruments. We can remove tough stains with a special electric toothbrush and polishing paste.

**Benefits:** Calculus is plaque that has hardened onto teeth. It usually forms near the gums and can irritate the gums. If left untreated, it can result in gum disease.

**Without cleaning:** Calculus provides a rough surface that can trap plaque. This can make it more difficult to keep teeth clean at home. Leaving calculus can also result in gum disease.

**Risks:** There are no likely risks.

## Follow-up treatments

If a student requires extra follow-up treatment as part of their care plan, Smile Squad will discuss this and seek informed consent.