

## **Aims and Objectives**

The aims of the workshop is to introduce children to defamation by teaching them the basic concepts of this area of law. This is done by framing it in an engaging context and through one which they can relate. The theme of bullying was used to introduce the topic.

## **Brief Explanation of Subject Matter**

Defamation is the civil law response to untrue comments that damage an individual's reputation. Defamation is the umbrella term for libel and slander. Libel is the written form and slander is the spoken form of defamation. There are four requirements to establish defamation;

1. The statement must be untrue
2. The statement must be published
3. The statement must refer to the claimant
4. The statement must be defamatory

According to the Defamation Act 1996, a statement is only defamatory if an ordinary reasonable individual would

- a) Think less of the person
- b) Think less of the person's ability to do their work
- c) Shun or avoid the person
- d) To treat the person as an object of fun or ridicule

In researching this area of law we referred to the legislation mentioned above. We also looked at some of the major cases that have developed defamation. We used many cases as inspiration for the situations for the quiz we did at the end of our presentation. We also used our previous lecture material from Tort in year one to refer to some of the main principles of defamation with the support of the textbook. We researched current affairs in the form of news reports to research areas such as defamation in social media.

## **Outline of Workshop**

Presentation based on 1 hour time allotment

1-5 mins –Introduction and skit

The skit was a way for us to introduce the topic so that the children could get a real grasp on what defamation is, it consisted of one member staying outside the classroom while the others defamed him. He then walked in, accused them of defamation and defended himself. This was effective at getting the children's interest in a topic that can be quite dry.

5-10 mins Powerpoint Slides

This consisted of introducing the concept of defamation and giving a simplified definition, and explanation of the operation of the law. This part is the one that most resembles traditional teaching, which is why we kept in to a minimum.

10-35 mins Break up into groups & Group work

Due to the fact that defamation is a wide subject that can be applied to a large number of situations, we felt that it would be best to divide the class into smaller groups and having each member present a different context for defamation and asking the children about it. These 5 topics were: Bullying, Newspapers, Social Media, Graffiti and in the workplace. The idea is that in such a small group it is easier to determine in the children actually understand and particular points can be re-iterated upon.

35-50-Presentation of Groups

Each group read or acted out the situation that they had discussed and explained to the rest of the class why it was defamation. This was so that the group felt that they had properly understood their case, while the rest of the class benefitted as well. This allowed us to cover a much wider range of situations than we would have otherwise been able to.

50-60-Quiz and Conclusion

The quiz was a way to conclude and close the project, testing what the children had learnt. We based those questions around situations similar or equivalent to those found in the case law.

### **Changes**

We took too much time while in the groups and therefore were pressed for time in the end. We therefore could not go through the quiz completely and to the detail that we wanted. Some of the terms that we used in our presentation were very new to the children and we should have made an effort to simplify and further explain some of the terms we used for example the word 'claimant' and 'damages'. Content of one of our situations (the Facebook situation) had to be changed because it dealt with homosexuality which was not a suitable topic for children of that age. We did not realise that some of the children struggled with reading out loud in front of the class. We also believe it would be beneficial to emphasise that in order to ascertain defamation, a number of questions must be answered in a rigorous step-by-step manner.

### **Materials**

Graffiti scenario:

Lizzy Smith is 13 years old and has been a new student at Mayfield Girls School for four months. During her four months at school, she scored fantastically in all of her subject tests with a teacher who paid a very good attention to Lizzy including everyone else during the test to make sure cheating did not take place. Lizzy became very popular and had bunch of friends but only made one best friend called Bailey. Bailey has got three other best friends

and they were all very jealous of her new friend Lizzy joining the group because she was very smart and pretty.

One lunch, the three girls came up with an idea to get her removed from the group, and decided to spray paint Lizzy's name in the toilet which reads 'LIZZY SMITH IS A CHEATER'. Lizzy walks ten minutes later in to the toilet and saw the graffiti. She locked herself in the cubicle and cried for hours, and even missed couple of lessons. Majority of the students saw the graffiti on the same day and immediately decided not to become her friend. Lizzy lost all of her bunch of friends including her new best friend Bailey, and as a result left the school and never returned.

Newspapers Graffiti:

## TAYLOR SWIFT MAY BE GUILTY OF LIP- SYNCING

New allegations have surfaced this week that would suggest that Taylor Swift has not actually been singing her own songs while on stage, but has merely been miming along. The 24 year old American pop-singer has denied any involvement in such activity. « I sing all of my own, both in the studio and during concerts », he told reporters when interviewed on the subject. This story comes to us just a few weeks after the scandal involving Britney Spears lip-syncing during her tour. Are there any pop stars left that can actually sing?



## HEAD OF LONDON MET MIGHT BE CORRUPT

The current Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, is under investigation for misconduct. This is according to a source within the IPCC (Independent Police Complaints Commission). The head of the London is rumoured to be guilty of serious offences, such as taking bribes to divert police attention away from particular violent gangs. These are serious allegations that if found to be true, would mean a long prison stretch for the Commissioner. Between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2009 the IPCC used its powers to begin 353 independent and 759 managed investigations into the most serious complaints against the police. These included deaths in police custody, shootings and fatal traffic incidents.

## JOSE MOURINHO DIVING SCANDAL

The Chelsea manager is to blame for the utterly outrageous culture of diving that exists in football right now. After Oscar's disgraceful dive in the match against Southampton, all Jose has done is make excuses. He is a cheat, and the game of football would be better if men like him were banned from being managers.



Football is no longer an honest man's sport and has become a farce; the players are always cheating by diving, encouraged by crooked managers like Mourinho.

### Facebook Scenario:

Little Johnny is a quiet boy in school who has few friends and prefers to sit and read a book at break rather than play ball with the guys. He is often a target for bullying at school. Johnny goes home one afternoon and has been tagged in the following status from a schoolmate Bob.

"Johnny Doe is a weirdo!"



The status has been liked by ten other classmates and shared by two others.

Johnny is devastated at this especially that it has been seen by many children at school. The next day he is bullied and none of his friends would speak to him. He tells his parents who intend to report this incident.

**Bullying Scenario:**

Derek Ditherington wanted to be on the fantastic fractions maths team to compete with other great mathletes in different schools.

Everyone calls Derek, Dopey Derek, Dumb Dez, DooDoo Brain D

because of his reputation, nobody wanted to be on a team with Derek and he wasn't able to compete in the competition.

How did that make Derek feel?

Were the statements true?

Was it fair to treat Derek that way??

**Sarah Cheesestick**

Everyone calls Sarah, smelly Sarah, Sarah Stinkalots

Sarah was asked by Miss PetalFlower to hand out juice and biscuits one breaktime, and nobody wanted to eat the biscuits or drink the juice that Sarah had handed them because they thought Sarah had made them dirty. Mrs Petalflower, to save time, asked somebody else to hand out the juice and biscuits in the future so the class wouldn't be disrupted again.

How did that make Sarah feel?

Were the statements true?

Was it fair to treat Sarah that way?

Tina Balloon wants to be the president of the school council.

Everyone calls Tina Tubby Tina, Tubbz...and other names relating to her being fat.

A smear campaign was run alongside Tina's campaign saying that if you vote for Tina she will eat you.

Tina did not win the competition and didn't gain a place on the school's council.

How did that make Tina feel?

Was the statement true?

Was it fair to treat Tina that way?

Who else is affected by what happens to Derek, Sarah and Tina?

What can we do to help people like Derek and Sarah and Tina?