A school in Taunton has begun teaching 13- and 14-year-old pupils about how to avoid defaming people on Twitter, Facebook and other social media.

Earlier this year, Lord McAlpine announced he would sue some Twitter users after being inaccurately connected to allegations of child abuse.

Media coverage of the McAlpine case prompted Taunton teachers to extend teaching on the use of the internet and social media, which falls into one section of the national curriculum. “The scheme began with lessons on basic internet safety”, said Carol Manley, senior teacher at the school. “We then realised that actually this was becoming quite a serious issue with things like parties on Facebook, the traps students can so easily fall into”.

The decision was made to teach pupils in year nine the basics of defamation, not least how to avoid being chased for compensation.

Manley said: “Of course, celebrities tweeting the wrong thing is in a different league to us, but it highlights how easily you can get something horribly wrong. It’s a good opportunity for us to say to the children, look, even something that starts off as a joke or something silly can actually get you into trouble. They’re also being taught to not even post anything like that.”

“If you wouldn’t say something to a person’s face nor in front of me or your parents, then don’t say it. That’s the key bit that we try to get across to them. Pupils have to be aware that anyone can be defamed”, she added.

Adapted from an article by Peter Walker, guardian.co.uk, 26 December 2012
I. Answer the following questions using your own words but taking into account the information in the text. (2 points: 1 point each)

a. Why did Taunton school decide to teach pupils about the dangers of social media?
b. Why does Manley think that it is important to teach children to use social media safely and legally?

II. Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)? Identify the part of the text that supports your answer by copying the exact passage on the answer sheet. (1.5 point: 0.5 each)

a. The subject on the use of the internet and social media is out of the national curriculum.
b. The subject on the use of the internet and social media includes basic internet security.
c. Defamation only affects celebrities.

III. Find a synonym for each of the four definitions below from these six options: (1 point: 0.25 each)

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IV. Choose a, b, or c, in each question below. Only one choice is correct (1.5 points: 0.5 each)

1. Taunton school decided...
   a. to teach people to avoid defaming but not being chased for compensation.
   b. to teach pupils to avoid both defaming and being chased for compensation.
   c. to teach nine-year-old pupils to avoid defamation.

2. Children are taught…
   a. not to tweet about celebrities.
   b. not to tweet the wrong thing.
   c. to post jokes and silly things.

3. Manley recommends pupils:
   a. say something you wouldn’t say to a person’s face.
   b. do not say anything in front of your parents.
   c. do not say something that you wouldn’t say in front of your parents.

Part B. Write a 130 to 150-word composition. (4 points)

Do you think it is a good idea to teach how to use social media safely and legally? Give reasons.