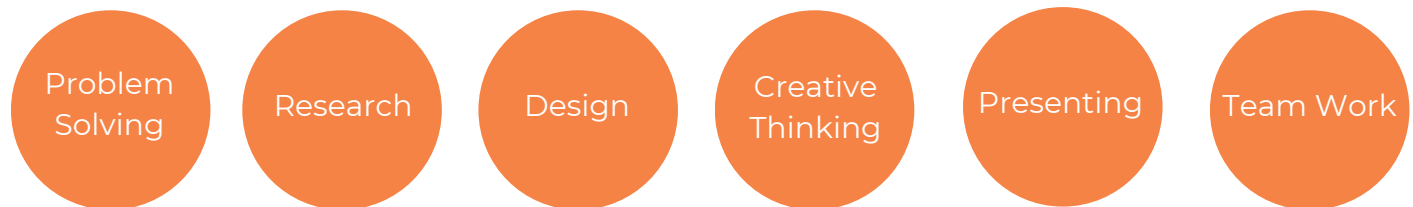


TechNExt is a celebration of the North East's thriving technology sector. The festival will span between 17-21 June and will feature events held across the region to spotlight the best tech businesses and talent the North East has to offer.

The Schools Challenge will be an opportunity for school children in the North East to engage in tech within the region. The Challenge will culminate in a celebration event held during the festival week which a selection of chosen schools and participating students will attend. This challenge invites school children between ages 9-13 years old to participate (across year groups 5-8). Your school will have access to an industry mentor to help you develop the session (up to 3 hours support).

Technology is all around us, but sometimes it's difficult to understand what a career in the tech industry might be like - the Schools Challenge will help school children get an insight into the industry. By focusing on 'Tech for Good' - the Challenge will encourage school children to develop an innovative tech-based solution that addresses a real life problem and could help them and the world they live in!

## Skills Development



On the next few pages of this document, we have provided three suggested challenges areas, which look at topics that students may want to address. However, as long as a submission is a tech innovation that addresses a real life problem, this will be accepted as an entry.

**Theme suggestions:** Climate Change/Net Zero, Online safety, Diversity and accessibility, Cost of living, Homelessness, Mental health & wellbeing, Anti-bullying, Money management

## The schools challenge is kindly sponsored by



*"With volunteers from our digital teams already running after school Coding Clubs at schools across the region, we felt that supporting the Schools Challenge was the perfect fit. The challenge aligns with the Newcastle Building Society group Purpose, part of which is to foster positive change within our communities.*

*The energy, the fresh perspectives, the curiosity your pupils will certainly bring to the table - that's gold for us at Newcastle Strategic Solutions. It challenges us, inspires us, and pushes us to think bigger and do better. We can't wait to see what these young minds will bring to the table and how they'll challenge us to up our game. Here's to a fantastic TechNExt 2024 and an even brighter future for tech in the North East."*

## TechNExt headline sponsors



TechNExt is underwritten by Dynamo North East CIC, which is co-organised by Sunderland Software City. The festival is a collaborative festival, working with partners across the North East and delivered by BeaconHouse Events.



## Our Planet

**Can you come up with a tech solution to help fight climate change?**

This challenge asks students to consider the issues surrounding climate change, and identify a particular area in which they think they can create a technological solution.

1. **Research:** Can students conduct some online research or have a class discussion to explore climate change and sustainability? Is there a gap in the market? What are the main issues and barriers that people struggle to understand about sustainability?
2. **Generate Idea:** How can tech be used to support people overcome the issue?
3. **Design:** Could this be a website? An app?

**Example:** An app which supports households to recycle correctly.

### **Outputs:**

Output of the challenge is open to interpretation for students and teachers.

Can include video, drawings for example.

All output content to be accompanied by a designed poster, which outlines the students process and idea.



**2**

## Wellbeing

**Can you come up with a tech solution to support your peers with their mental wellbeing?**

This challenge asks students to consider how to encourage good mental health and wellbeing. Students could identify methods in which positive mental health can be promoted through a technological solution.

1. **Research:** Can students identify strategies that they think are useful for wellbeing? What helps people have good mental health and what could be done to support people with poor mental health?
2. **Generate Idea:** How can tech be used to support people to have good mental health?
3. **Design:** Could this be a website? An app? A video series?

**Example:** A VR trail which maps out all the best green spaces in a local area.

### **Outputs:**

Output of the challenge is open to interpretation for students and teachers.

Can include video, drawings for example.

All output content to be accompanied by a designer poster, which outlines the students process and idea.



**3**

## Online safety

**Can you come up with a tech solution to ensure your peers are safe when using the internet?**

This challenge asks students to consider how to stay safe online. Students should consider the methods in which to raise awareness of online safety, or how to keep people safe.

1. **Research:** Student should consider online risks, and why it is important to stay safe online.
2. **Generate Idea:** How can tech be used to ensure safety while using the internet?
3. **Design:** Could this be a website? An app? A video series?

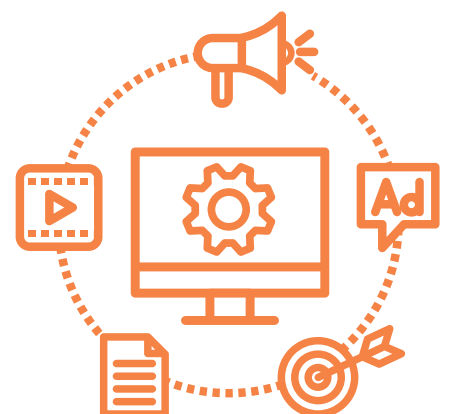
**Example:** A mobile phone attachment which filters keywords from online content, blocks harmful sites and/or manages screentime.

### Outputs:

Output of the challenge is open to interpretation for students and teachers.

Can include video, drawings for example.

All output content to be accompanied by a designed poster, which outlines the students process and idea.



4

## Money Management

**Can you come up with a tech solution to help school children understand how to manage money?**

This challenge asks students to consider how to support and inform school children on money management.

1. **Research:** Students should research existing apps and resources that support young people in money management
2. **Generate Idea:** How can these apps features be further extended to engage students and help educate in money management
3. **Design:** Describe the additional features, their purpose and design how the app interface may look

**Example:** App interface designs could be created on a computer or on paper

### Outputs:

Output of the challenge is open to interpretation for students and teachers.

Can include video, drawings for example.

All output content to be accompanied by a designed poster, which outlines the students process and idea.



## How to get involved

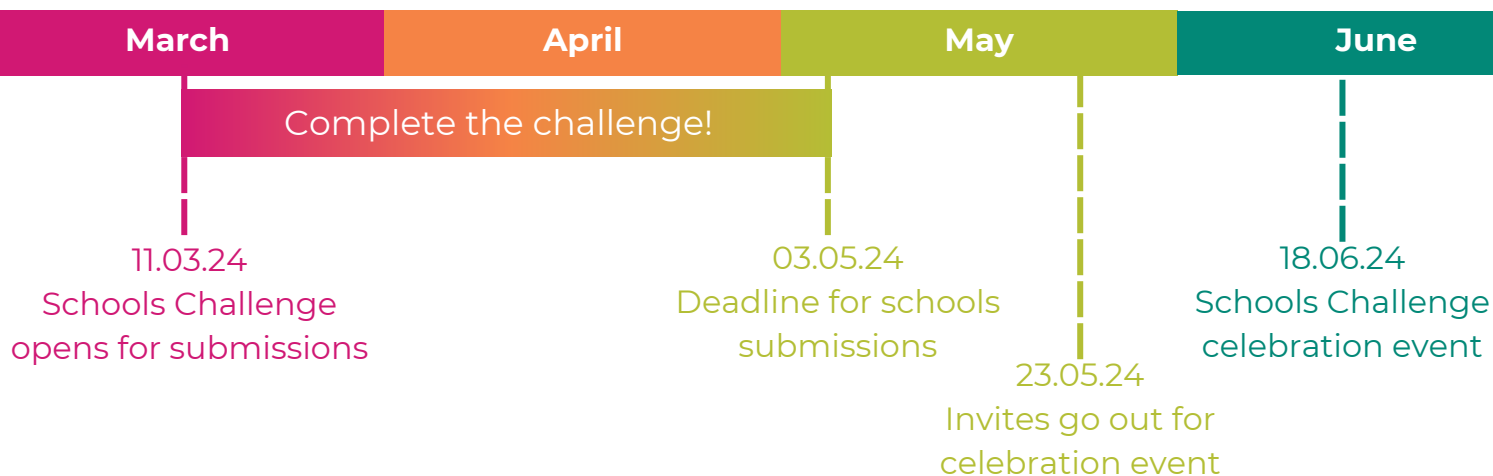
- 1** Fill out an expression of interest form.  
This will let us know you'd like to take part, what age the participating children are and whether you'd like any support from us or an 'industry mentor.'
- 2** Plan your challenge, consider your resources and the participating students. Challenges can be completed in small or large groups. but please be aware that only 8-10 students from selected schools will be able to attend the celebration event.  
If you opted in for an 'industry mentor,' we'll get in touch to organise this.
- 3** Submit your challenge responses via our online form.  
Your school can submit up to 10 entries.  
**Deadline 03.05.2024**

The Schools Challenge steering committee will identify a small group of students from selected schools to be invited to a celebration event on the morning of **Tuesday 18th June, in Durham City Centre**. If selected, you will be invited to attend by 23 May 2024.

There will also be an opportunity to display students' work as part of a number of public exhibitions across local authority areas.

All participating schools will receive a digital certificate.

The selected student submissions will receive a physical certificate at the celebration event. Other prizes available for successful schools include tech kit, work experience and mentoring from regional tech companies.



[View the Schools Challenge FAQ's and useful resources](#)

Any questions? Get in touch [getinvolved@technext.co.uk](mailto:getinvolved@technext.co.uk)