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**N E W S R E L E A S E**

**2018’s App-prentice challenge out to put**

**young minds to the test with tech**

Buckingham’s own Cloudy Group is very happy to announce the 2018 App-prentice Challenge, taking place 16 - 18 July this year, at [Mandeville School](https://www.mandeville.bucks.sch.uk/) in Aylesbury, Bucks.

Cloudy Group and its partners [Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership](https://www.buckstvlep.co.uk/) (BTVLEP) and [Technovisual Education](https://www.technovisualeducation.co.uk/) will be supported by Microsoft to challenge 150 Year 10 students to create their own mobile apps.

“As part of the curriculum changes taking place at The Mandeville School, we have implemented a new careers strategy across the whole school,” says Chris Penson, PSHCE, Careers, and Critical Thinking Coordinator at Mandeville. “One aspect of this is to ensure our students have the opportunity to work with, or see, local businesses in action.”

Much like the popular BBC show *The Apprentice*, teams of 10 will compete to make their own apps which will be judged on how useful they are to the life of the school. The winning team even has the potential for their idea to be made into a real app that serves a legitimate purpose for the school.

This is the first year that Mandeville have run a Year 10 Enterprise event so bringing in local business like Cloudy Group and Technovisual Education – not to mention Microsoft – is expected to have a significant impact on the students’ learning.

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“When I started organising the Year 10 Enterprise Activity, I had no idea it would grow into something this substantial,” Penson says. “I know our students will not only enjoy themselves, but will benefit from this session academically.”

“CloudyGroup is thrilled to be the driving force behind this project,” says David Hall, Director of Cloudy Group. “Working with young people is something we’re incredibly passionate about. It's great to have this opportunity to encourage young people to use their creative skills alongside modern tech."

Jackie Campbell, Skills Development Manager at BLVLEP adds: "Employer engagement in developing enterprising challenges like this is invaluable, and this fantastic programme promises to encourage student's creative thinking and entrepreneurship skills whilst also giving them a valuable, practical view of working in the IT industry.”

The three day programme is designed to give young people a taste of life in the modern digital workplace, and all the hope, challenge, and joy that goes into creating work digitally.

“Microsoft is proud to support this project and work with the Cloudy Team, Mandeville School and all the partners involved,” says Ian Fordham, Director of Education, Microsoft UK. “A team of Microsoft specialists will be on hand throughout the event to help students grow their digital skills, develop their apps and help transform potentially game-changing ideas into reality. This is a fantastic way for us to work with business partners to give something back and invest in young people to ensure they are equipped with the skills they need to enter the digital economy.”

**more…**

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Mark Vanstone, Director of Technovisual Education and a developer of The Official F1 Timing App also suggests: “As young people prepare themselves to work in business these days, they need to be more well versed in how those businesses operate and the technology they will be using. Technovisual Education is proud to be part of a project that helps give these students a real insight in to how to use those skills.”

**Ends**

**Note to editors**

The aim of BTVLEP’s[Skills Hub](https://oppsinbucks.org/) – one of the first LEPs to develop such a hub – is to make a difference to young people’s employability while addressing the needs of employers. In Bucks, the level of employer engagement activity in schools can vary from school to school, and the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub is working to ensure all schools have access to effective and impactful employer interactions.

In order to help young people gain the valuable, constructive, rewarding work experience required, the Bucks Skills Hub launched WANNABE ([www.wannabebucks.org](http://www.wannabebucks.org)) where employers can post opportunities for young people to apply for. The site provides extensive information, guidance, a careerometer tool to explore earning potential and career prospects, as well as work experience, apprenticeship and part/full time job vacancies. Young people can look for work experience opportunities which are in line with their ambitions, rather than perhaps spending time at their parents’ place of work or finding placements via their parents’ network. There is a broad range of opportunities for young people to apply for.

The [Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership](http://buckstvlep.co.uk/) (BTVLEP) is a business-led ‘partnership of equals’ between local government and the private sector, building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in the County. Formed in January 2012, the partnership balances a uniquely strong collective business voice with a cohesive elected local leadership. Coming together to engineer the conditions needed to drive forward business prosperity in the county and beyond, BTVLEP recognises that an important part of this is to support education and skills providers and employers to ensure our young people have the right skills to meet the needs of the economy, including the growth sectors such as life-sciences, space, creative industries and advanced engineering.

[Buckinghamshire Business First](http://www.bbf.uk.com/) (BBF), is the Growth Hub for Buckinghamshire and is backed by Buckinghamshire based entrepreneurs, thousands of SMEs and Local Authorities.  BBF provides the link between public policy and the business community in Buckinghamshire and works with partners to create a dynamic business environment in the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain.

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