

Cloud Coach FAQs

Cloud Coach Program

What is the time commitment for mentors?

Mentors are expected to write one message a week for eight weeks. Writing time varies, but messages usually take 15-30 minutes to compose. Mentors are also expected to attend the Cloud Summit. The overall commitment is approximately 12 hours.

Why do we work with 9th graders?

Research shows that ninth grade is a pivotal developmental time for students. At this age, students are more open to receiving outside advice. BestPrep has specifically designed the Cloud Coach program to work with ninth graders because engagement with school in ninth grade is the biggest predictor of high school graduation rates (<https://gennextmsp.org/high-school-graduation-results/>). Cloud Coach aims to help students create a personal vision for future success that motivates them to do their best in school. Search Institute designed the Gateway Prompts with this research in mind.

My student is interested in a career, and I happen to know someone in that field! Is it okay to connect them so they may talk?

It is outside of the program boundaries for students to connect with anyone other than you. However, we would encourage you to talk with your colleagues about any resources or pieces of advice they may have and pass along any information to your student.

What if I can no longer continue with the program?

Let your BestPrep or Company Coordinator know about your change in status as soon as possible. If you leave the company mid-connection, we unfortunately are not able to continue facilitating the mentorship. We will be able to re-match your student with another mentor from your company.

Can I still write messages after the program concludes?

No. The message portal closes upon the conclusion of the program.

Writing Messages

Who sends the first message?

Mentors. The message exchange is always initiated by mentors. Even if your student hasn't written to you, we hope you will send a message to keep the conversation moving forward.

What do we write about?

Mentors use dialogue starters, or Gateway Prompts, to shape the content of their messages. BestPrep based the Gateway Prompts on research conducted by Search Institute. They are intended to center the conversation around envisioning and planning for your mentee's future.

What are the Gateway Prompt tracks?

These Gateway Prompts were designed using Search Institute's Developmental Relationships framework. They are meant to guide the messages you'll initiate with your student each week. The different tracks are designed to address students' differing life plans and goals. Mentors will self-select which track to take with their student each week in order to personalize the experience.

When should I switch tracks?

All mentors should begin the connection in Track Two. Afterwards, switching between tracks is at the discretion of the mentor. Some Gateway Prompts may prompt you to consider switching tracks under

certain circumstances. BestPrep also provides a resource if you are not receiving any messages from your student. If you are unsure about switching tracks, contact your BestPrep Coordinator.

What if I'm not sure what to say to my student?

You may look at our Sample Mentor Messages for ideas on how to start. You can also reach out to your BestPrep Coordinator for assistance.

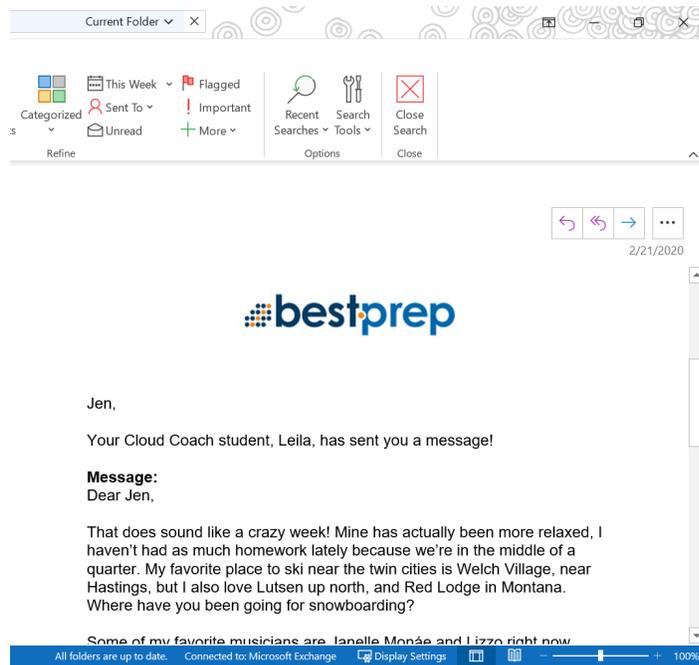
What if I am on vacation or unable to complete a message on time?

If you cannot write when you are gone, we hope that you will ask your BestPrep Coordinator to send the prompt early so that you can still write to your student about that week's topic. If you are unable to write a message ahead of time, let your BestPrep Coordinator know. Most importantly, please let your student know when you will be gone and when you will be returning. Even if students do not receive a message from their mentor, they will still receive the weekly prompt to write.

Using the Portal

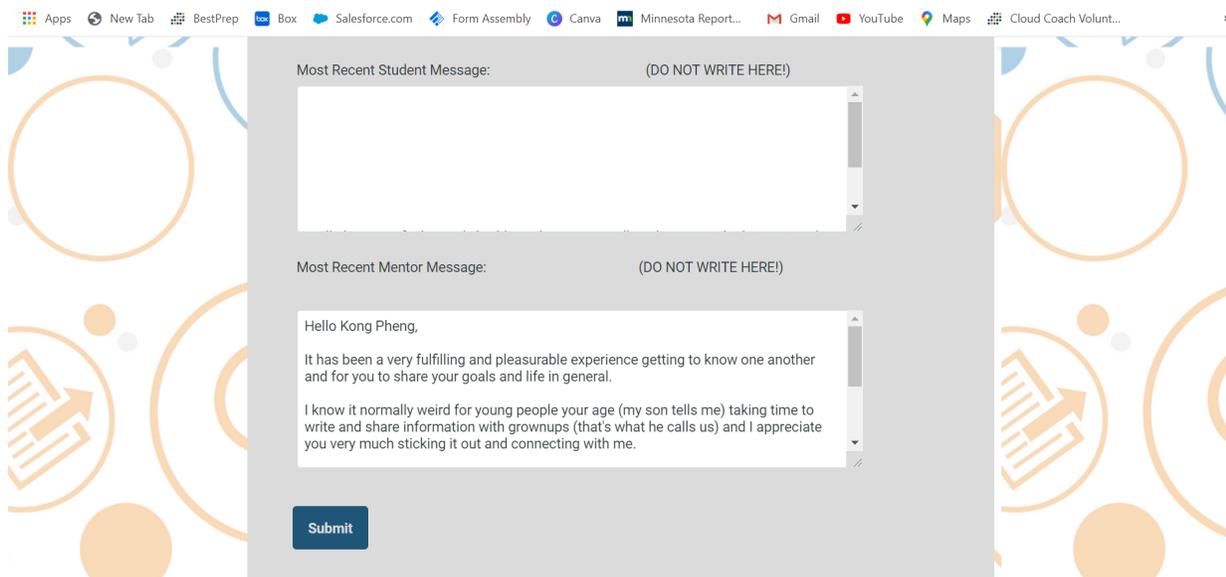
How do I know if my student has written this week?

You will receive a notification email immediately after your student's message passes through our system. Below is a sample of the email you will receive when your student writes you:



If you do not believe you've received a notification, check your junk/spam folder. If you still do not see an email, then your student almost certainly has not written.

You can also confirm if your student has written or not by clicking on the portal link in the weekly prompt email. When you click the link to write to your student using the most current Gateway Prompt, you will see three boxes: one to type your new message, one with the text of your message from last week, and one with the text of the student's message from the current week. If the student's box is blank, they have not written. The example below shows that the mentor wrote the previous week, but the student did not.



If you are still unsure whether or not your student has written, contact your BestPrep coordinator.

What if I haven't heard from my student?

Each week your BestPrep Coordinator is sending a report to the teachers showing which students have not written. The teachers then follow up with those students. If you have not heard from your student in two weeks, please contact your BestPrep coordinator. They will look into the situation and get back to you.

Is it okay to send my student articles/links to resources related to what we're discussing?

Yes. Please note that some schools block certain websites. Be sure the link you are sending is a reputable resource. Note, you are not able to send your student any attachments through the portal system.

Cloud Summit

Do I get to meet my student in person?

Yes, you will meet your student at the Cloud Summit*.

*In the 2021-2022 school year, students and mentors will be participating in a virtual activity due to COVID-19.

What is the Cloud Summit?

The Cloud Summit is an in-person meeting between mentors and students held at the company location. Mentors usually eat a meal with their students, give their student a tour of the company, and participate in pre-planned activities and/or a presentation. The Cloud Summit typically lasts ninety minutes to two hours.

What if I am unable to attend the Cloud Summit?

Because of the important relationship-building aspect of the Cloud Summit, we encourage you to make every effort to attend. However, if you have a conflict, notify your BestPrep or Company Coordinator as soon as possible. Also, make sure to let your student know you will not be there. If you have a coworker who is a Cloud Coach mentor, please ask if they would be willing to have your student join them during the Cloud Summit. You may also send a coworker who is not a Cloud Coach mentor in your place to be paired with your student. Please let your BestPrep Coordinator know if you are sending someone in your place or if another Cloud Coach mentor is willing to have your student join them.

Will I know ahead of time if my student is coming to the Cloud Summit?

If we know ahead of time we will share that with you, but many times we don't know. Some students may have turned in their permission slips but woke up sick the day of the Cloud Summit or didn't come to school. Even if your student can't come, we still encourage you to attend; there will be students whose mentors are unable to attend and will need someone to be paired with.

Can I give a gift to my student?

No. For the sake of fairness, BestPrep does not permit individual gift-giving. However, if a company wants to give a small gift to every student, that is permissible.

Working with your Student

I am matched with an ELL (English Language Learner) student. Would it be better to find a mentor who speaks their native language? I speak their native language, is it OK if I speak that language with them?

Educators have told us that participating in Cloud Coach is a valuable language practice experience for ELL students. Students have the opportunity to be brave and connect with an adult using the English language, which will help them succeed in school and professional environments. Even if you speak your student's native language, we ask that you communicate with them in English. If language is a barrier, or you are unsure of how to respond, you can contact your BestPrep Coordinator.

Can I find out if there is something going on with my student who is not writing?

Because of confidentiality, we aren't able to share much, but we can still check in with the educator. We will pass on what we can.

What should I do if I receive a message with rude, vulgar, or inappropriate content?

BestPrep's message portal should automatically flag and halt messages with inappropriate content. If you receive something which makes you uncomfortable in any way, please reach out to your BestPrep Coordinator.

Why is it important that I continue writing my student even though I've never heard from them?

Cloud Coach is designed to provide mentors to every type of ninth grade student. We know that includes students who are already excelling, students who are working hard and doing fine, and students who may or may not graduate because of barriers they might be facing. While your BestPrep Coordinator can't provide you with details about your specific student, we do know that barriers some students are experiencing include: homelessness, working a full time job in addition to going to school to help care for their family, recently moved to the country and spends the entire class period working on one or two sentences to send to their mentor.

You are likely working with a student who has never had a mentor before. Your student might not have an adult regularly check in on them just to ask how they are doing. Educators have told us that they often see students reading the messages even if they aren't responding. You never know the impact something you write or some advice you give may have on your mentee. We know your student may not be fully participating in the program right now, but we're hoping you can continue to check in on them every week to show that you care and aren't giving up on them. If you haven't already, move to Track 1. Using the Track 1 prompt, it should only take you 10 minutes or less to send a message.

My student has not written to me. Why is it important I keep writing?

It is important to continue writing because every student is at a different point with being ready to talk about their future and open up. Even if you only get a sentence or two, this is showing the student cares enough to talk with you. Teachers have also let us know that sometimes messages are very short because the student is part of the ELL (English language Learner) program. For some students it may take the entire class period to craft those couple sentences.