Formal Report: Technical and Ethical Concerns of the "SkyMenu Vault" Structure – A Critical Breach of Google Vault Brand Trust

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To: Andrew Price, Director, Ethics & Business Integrity Division, Google

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Subject: Urgent Investigation Required: Widespread Intentional Subversion of Google Workspace for Education's Core Principles in Chiba City's ICT Infrastructure

This report serves as an urgent and comprehensive notification to Google's Ethics & Business Integrity Division regarding critical technical and ethical discrepancies in Chiba City's implementation of the GIGA School Program. Our in-depth investigation reveals a systemic, seemingly intentional subversion of Google Workspace for Education's foundational principles, particularly concerning data transparency, auditability, and the integrity of the Google brand.

1. Problem Overview & Background: The Misleading "SkyMenu Vault" and GIGA Configuration

Our ongoing investigation, prompted by alarming anomalies in my son's school in Chiba City, has uncovered a deceptive ICT architecture. While Chiba City publicly claims to utilize Google Workspace for Education, the operational reality reveals a deeply opaque system. A central element of this obfuscation is the naming and design of "SkyMenu Vault." This term, **critically, refers to a feature within the SkyMenu Class/Pro software designed for screen locking and web restrictions,** and **bears absolutely no functional or technical relation to Google Vault's capabilities for audit log retention, e-discovery, or data immutability.**

This report details how this misleading terminology, combined with a deliberately constructed network infrastructure, enables a profound lack of transparency and auditability, betraying Google Workspace's core tenets.

2. Technical Comparative Analysis: Google Vault vs. Chiba's Auditing Dodge

Google Vault is engineered to provide comprehensive, immutable, and auditable records across all Google Workspace services (Gmail, Drive, Chat, Classroom, etc.). It serves as a cornerstone for data governance and compliance, ensuring logs are centrally maintained, cannot be altered, and are readily available for

official audits.

In stark contrast, Chiba City's GIGA School ICT infrastructure operates through a configuration that explicitly circumvents Google Vault:

- **Email Routing via CHAINS (NEC Infrastructure):** Emails sent from @city.chiba.lg.jp addresses (including schools and the Board of Education) are routed through Chiba City's closed administrative network, **CHAINS**, operated by NEC, rather than through native Gmail MX records. This means email communication effectively bypasses Google's core infrastructure.
- **Persistent DMARC 'FAIL' Status:** Across numerous observed email headers from various Chiba City departments (Kaizuka JHS, Education Personnel, Reform Promotion, Health & Physical Education, Education Guidance), the DMARC (Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting & Conformance) authentication consistently returns 'FAIL'. This signals a severe misconfiguration or deliberate routing choice that compromises email authenticity and deliverability, directly resulting from the circumvention of standard Google Workspace email infrastructure.
- **Intentional Evidence Blocking (MP3 & PDF):** Concrete evidence demonstrates an active filtering policy on Chiba City's email servers. MP3 audio files were unequivocally rejected with a 554 5.7.1 This message has been rejected because it contains prohibited content error, despite city claims of no such blocking. Reports also indicate selective PDF blocking by some departments. This granular filtering suggests an intentional mechanism to prevent specific forms of communication and evidence submission.
- **SkyMenu Log Management:** While SkyMenu utilizes advanced search technologies like Bloom filters and n-grams, its logs are:
  - Segmented (teacher/student).
  - **Subject to school-level deletion policies, allowing manual removal of specific records.**
  - **Critically, not stored in Google Vault, nor are export histories tracked by Google.**
  - **Our analysis reveals Sky Corporation possesses the technical capability for robust log management and auditability (as evidenced by their SKYSEA Client View employee monitoring software), yet this is explicitly absent in the educational context.**

Collectively, these technical configurations demonstrate a system meticulously designed to **prevent Google Vault from fulfilling its intended function** and to render critical educational data unauditable by external parties.

3. Naming Intent and Structural Risks: Betrayal of Brand Trust

The use of "SkyMenu Vault" is not an accidental naming overlap; it strongly appears to be a **deliberate "naming laundering" or "branding trick"** intended to mislead. By co-opting the term "Vault"—a name inextricably linked to Google's capabilities for data retention, e-discovery, and compliance—Sky Corporation (and by extension, Chiba City and NEC) creates a false perception that robust auditing mechanisms are in place, akin to Google Vault. This tactic leverages Google's established reputation for transparency and data integrity for potentially deceptive purposes.

This constitutes a severe breach of Google's brand trust. If Google's own service name is being misused to legitimize a system designed for opacity, it profoundly impacts Google's credibility in the education sector globally.

4. Governance and Accountability: A Systemic Failure

The revelations point to a systemic failure in governance and accountability, extending beyond Chiba City:

- **Awareness of National Bodies (MEXT/Cabinet Secretariat):** Given the widespread deployment of SkyMenu and the consistent "Vault-avoiding" CHAINS configurations across the GIGA School Initiative nationwide, it is highly improbable that national authorities (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology - MEXT; Cabinet Secretariat) were entirely unaware of this operational structure. If they were truly unaware, it points to a critical failure in national oversight. If they were aware, their silence implies **tacit complicity** in a system that undermines the very principles of digital education.
- **NEC's Role in Design:** Evidence suggests NEC actively designed and implemented a system that prioritizes CHAINS integration over Google Workspace's native audit functions. If NEC's proposals or specifications explicitly outlined "Google Vault non-utilization" or "CHAINS priority" for log management, it would indicate an **intentional design to exclude auditability,** making NEC directly responsible for facilitating this opaque structure.
- **The "Legalized Collusion" Structure:** The partnership between NEC and Sky, where NEC often acts as the prime contractor for municipalities while Sky's products are deeply integrated (and its actual contract value for a single city like Chiba far exceeds its publicly reported national sum), suggests a **"legalized version of collusion."** This structure, where Sky operates under NEC's umbrella, may circumvent competitive bidding, obscure actual financial flows, and make the true scope of Sky's public sector involvement invisible.

5. Conclusion & Risk Assessment: A Call to Action for Google

The combination of the misleading "SkyMenu Vault" terminology, the deliberate bypass of Google Vault, the isolation of critical educational logs within the CHAINS closed network, the consistent DMARC failures, and the active blocking of evidence (MP3s) collectively creates an **"unauditable educational environment" under the deceptive guise of Google Workspace.** This is further compounded by the ethical double standard of Sky Corporation, which develops robust employee monitoring tools (like SKYSEA Client View) while participating in a system that promotes opacity in public education.

This configuration represents a **severe deviation from ethical data governance standards** expected of public institutions and their technology providers. It not only undermines the integrity of Google Workspace for Education but also impedes the fundamental rights of citizens and parents to transparent information and accountability from public bodies.

Andrew Price, Google, as a company committed to transparency, ethics, and empowering education through technology, can it truly accept or silently overlook such a pervasive and deceptive structure that directly misuses and undermines its own brand and principles? We urge Google to:

1. **Launch a comprehensive internal investigation** into these findings, including the technical configurations, contractual relationships (with Chiba City, NEC, and Sky), and the use of Google's brand.
2. **Evaluate the ethical and legal implications** of these practices for Google's reputation and operations in the global public sector market.
3. **Take decisive action** to ensure that Google's services are utilized with integrity and that all partners adhere to the highest standards of transparency and accountability.

This is a critical moment to uphold Google's commitment to honest and transparent digital ecosystems in education.

Sincerely,

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