

MENU

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 19 2019

Police warn schools and parents over playground money launderers

Bank accounts of 5,800 youngsters used last year to clean cash

Kenza Bryan

September 15 2019, 12:01am, The Sunday Times



Online ads are used to recruit youngsters



Share



Save

Parents are to be urged by the police to look out for signs that their children are being targeted by gangs to help move money from crime.

MENU

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 19 2019

become “money mules”, lured into laundering cash for criminals.

The move comes after Money revealed in July that children as young as eight are handing control of their bank accounts to gangs that target them at school and sports clubs or on social media.

The fraudsters pick on youngsters, as they need access to bank accounts with no history of suspicious activity and which cannot be traced back to them. Criminals who get their hands on a child’s debit card or bank details can deposit money into the “clean” account and then take it out again in cash.

Signs of this happening could include a child acquiring expensive gadgets and clothes they would not usually be able to afford, or appearing secretive and stressed, possibly because they are being bullied or paid to hand over their bank details and warned not to tell anyone.

There has been a 73% increase in the number of young people aged 14 to 18 using bank accounts for money muling in the past two years, according to the national fraud prevention service Cifas.

In 2018, there were 5,819 cases of 14 to 18-year-old money mules, compared with 3,360 cases in 2016.

MENU

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 19 2019

told.

The same message will also go out to social media, school websites, newsletters and message boards.

The letter from police warns: “When someone is caught, their bank account will be closed and they will have problems getting student loans, mobile phone contracts and credit. They could even face arrest for money laundering, which carries a maximum sentence of 14 years in prison.”

Katy Worobec, head of economic crime at UK Finance, the banking industry body, said: “It may seem like an easy way to make some cash, but as well as being illegal, being a money mule means you will also be helping to fund serious crimes such as drug dealing and people trafficking. Remember, never give your bank account details to anyone unless you know and trust them.”

Parents will be warned not to contact directly anyone they suspect of organising money mules. Instead, call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

[Crime](#)[Economics](#)[Schools](#)[Police](#)

Share

Save

MENU

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 19 2019



The unexpected destination for your next active holiday

SPONSORED



The cruise ship design that takes wellbeing to the next level

SPONSORED

Make flat tyres a thing of the past with this car

SPONSORED



Science fiction is about to become an everyday reality

SPONSORED

Comments are subject to our community guidelines, which can be viewed [here](#).

[▲ BACK TO TOP](#)

GET IN TOUCH

[About us](#)
[Contact us](#)
[Help](#)
[The Times Editorial Complaints](#)
[The Sunday Times Editorial Complaints](#)
[Place an announcement](#)
[Classified advertising](#)
[Display advertising](#)
[The Times corrections](#)
[The Sunday Times corrections](#)

MORE FROM THE TIMES AND THE SUNDAY TIMES

MENU

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 19 2019

[Times Currency Services](#)[The Sunday Times Wine Club](#)[The Times Academy](#)[Times Print Gallery](#)[Times Crossword Club](#)[Sunday Times Driving](#)[Times+](#)[The Sunday Times Rich List](#)[Times Expert Traveller](#)[Good University Guide](#)[Schools Guide](#)[Newsletters](#)[Best Places to Live](#)[Best Places to Stay](#)[Announcements](#)[Times Appointments](#)[Podcasts](#)

© Times Newspapers Limited 2019.

Registered in England No. 894646.

Registered office: 1 London Bridge Street, SE1 9GF.

[Privacy & cookie policy](#)[Licensing](#)[Cookie settings](#)[Site map](#)[Topics](#)[Commissioning terms](#)[Terms and conditions](#)