

Mum is jailed for allowing daughter (15) to skip school

By Eimear Cotter

A MOTHER who repeatedly turned a blind eye to her 15-year-old daughter skipping school has been sentenced to 14 days in prison.

The 40-year-old, who cannot be named to protect her child, avoided jail a month ago as her partner was serving time for the non-payment of fines.

A judge deferred sentencing on that date, as did not want the couple's youngest child to be met at the school gates by a social worker telling him both his parents were in jail.

Wilful

Judge James McDonnell sentenced the woman to two weeks in prison after he heard her partner was recently released from custody, and was now able to look after the children.

Tallaght District Court heard that the girl had been leaving the family home in her uniform but had been meeting a friend instead of attending school.

Imposing the sentence, Judge McDonnell said the child might be wilful and thumbing its nose at authority, but it was important to send out a message to the wider community that parents are responsible for their children's attendance at school.

The court heard that the woman had taken full responsibility for her daughter's repeated non-attendance in the last two years. The action against her was taken by the National Education Welfare Board.

Defence solicitor Michael Hennessy said the couple now realised that they would have to bring their daughter to school, and hold her hand until she was inside the gates.

He said they had been doing this for the last three weeks, and had been in regular contact with the school to ensure the girl was attending.

The woman told Judge McDonnell that her family had been through "hell" in the last four years, and the couple broke up for a while.

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