

Start of September term 1963

Roy Blatchford

September 2021

Sifting this summer through family archives, my mother gave me this typed letter, written by the City of Bath Director of Education on 31st May 1963:

Dear Sir or Madam,

Allocation of pupils to secondary schools in September 1963

Exam No. 707

Name Blatchford Roy

The Schools Selection Board have considered the results of the Schools Selection Test, the recommendation of Head Teachers and, in certain cases, reports from the Interviewing Panels, as well as the expression of parents' wishes, and it is now possible to state that your son will be offered a place at the City of Bath Boys' School. The headmaster will wish to see him before he enters the school and will be getting in touch with you in due course.

Will you please let me know by Thursday, 6th June at the latest whether or not you wish your son to take up this place.

I want to make it clear that when a boy is offered a place in a secondary grammar school, his parents are expected to leave him at school at least until the end of the school year in which he reaches his 16th birthday. Parents should also be prepared to consider allowing their son to continue his education at secondary grammar school up to the age of 18, if, in the opinion of the Head and Governors of the school, that is in his best interests.

Parents who are not prepared to give their son every encouragement to complete the grammar school course should not allow him to take up a place in a grammar school.

Yours faithfully

Director of Education

A style from another age. Interviewing former Secretary of State Shirley Williams a few years ago, she reminded me that many children did not take up grammar school places in that era because parents - on financial grounds - could not make the guarantee outlined in the final paragraph.

As this term begins, 600,000+ children enter their new secondary schools. Building on their many achievements in primary, they begin an education and training journey which will take them to at least age 18.

All children and their parents can expect that journey to be an enjoyable and positive experience, led by teachers who this academic year as never before are determined to provide renewal, ambition and equality.

The 2021-22 academic year promises to be a special one for all learners.