

# Breaking News English.com

## Hero boy swims for four hours to save his family – 9th February 2026

### Level 4

A boy is a hero after an epic swim to save his family. Austin Appelbee, 13, and his family were kayaking and paddleboarding in Australia. They were in shallow water, but the wind pushed them four kilometres away from land. It was getting dark. Austin tried to kayak to shore, but the waves flipped his boat over. He knew he was in trouble. He said he had no choice but to swim to land to raise the alarm. He swam through shark-frequented waters.

Austin got to the beach and phoned for help. Coastguards found and rescued the boy's mother and two younger sisters. The boy said: "I hit the bottom of the beach and I just collapsed....I had to sprint two kilometres to get to the phone." Rescuers called him "superhuman". One rescuer could not praise him highly enough. He said Austin's determination and courage saved the lives of his family. Austin's mother called the experience a "nightmare".

### Level 5

A boy was hailed a hero after an epic swim to save his family. Austin Appelbee, 13, and his family were on holiday in Australia. They were kayaking and paddleboarding in shallow water when the wind pushed them offshore. They ended up four kilometres away from land. The daylight was fading. Austin decided to kayak to shore to get help. However, the waves had damaged his kayak and it flipped over. He said he then lost an oar and knew he was in trouble. He said he had no alternative but to swim to land to raise the alarm. He swam through shark-frequented waters.

Austin got to the beach and phoned for help. This sparked a rescue operation. Coastguards found the boy's mother and two younger sisters. The boy said: "I hit the bottom of the beach and I just collapsed, and then, after that, I had to sprint two kilometres to get to the phone." Rescuers called him "superhuman". One rescuer said Austin's actions could not "be praised highly enough". He said Austin's "determination and courage ultimately saved the lives of his mother and siblings". Austin's mother Joanne, 47, said the experience was "an absolute nightmare".

### Level 6

A 13-year-old Australian boy has been hailed a hero after an epic swim that saved his family. The boy, Austin Appelbee, and his family were on a beach holiday in Western Australia. They were kayaking and paddleboarding in shallow water when strong winds pushed them farther offshore. They ended up over four kilometres away from land, and the daylight was fading. Austin decided to kayak to shore to get help. However, the waves had damaged his kayak, which had taken in water and flipped over. He said he then lost an oar and knew he was in trouble. He decided he had no alternative but to swim back to land. He swam through shark-frequented waters to raise the alarm.

Austin made it to the beach and phoned for help. This sparked a huge rescue operation, which resulted in coastguards finding the teenager's mother and two younger sisters. The boy said: "I hit the bottom of the beach and I just collapsed, and then, after that, I had to sprint two kilometres to get to the phone." Rescuers called his efforts "superhuman". One rescuer said Austin's actions could not "be praised highly enough". He added that the teenager's "determination and courage ultimately saved the lives of his mother and siblings". Austin's mother Joanne, 47, told reporters: "The wind picked up. We lost oars, and we drifted out further. It was an absolute nightmare."